Survivors' narratives of intimate partner violence in Cape Town, South Africa: A life history approach

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COMPULSORY DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature: Signed by candidate Date: 30 March 2019

Abstract

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a problem that is present and pervasive globally and in South Africa. In the South African context, IPV exists within a larger context of high levels of interpersonal violence and violence against women. Understanding the context in which IPV occurs from the perspective of survivors is important for informing effective intervention and prevention programs to counteract its effects. This study explores the life histories of South African women who have experienced IPV. Framed through the lens of intersectionality, it gauges the broader context within which IPV emerges and is sustained, and explores how experiences of IPV are shaped at the intersection of women's identity markers of race, class and gender. This study is one of a few studies that have used life history methods with women to explore their life contexts and experiences of IPV. Purposive sampling was used to recruit a sample of 11 women based in a Cape Town women's shelter for abused women and children. Two semi-structured qualitative life history interviews were conducted with each participant. The interviews were transcribed and analysed through thematic narrative analysis, where four noteworthy narrative themes emerged, namely *An unsteady and violent beginning, No place called home: A search for belonging and survival, IPV: The unanticipated cost of love and belonging,* and *Normalisation of IPV experiences: The effects of withdrawal from support.* The findings and their relation to existing literature as well as recommendations for future IPV research are discussed. One of the key findings of the study was that the childhood context of the participants was the first point of identifying intersectional oppression and marginalisation that may have shaped a vulnerability to the women's later experiences of IPV. Another key finding was recognising the value that women place on love and belonging in the context of a difficult, violent and low socioeconomic childhood background, and how this could have an impact on the vulnerability of women to IPV. The use of a life history approach framed by intersectionality thus demonstrated significant benefits in tracking the contextual experiences of women who have experienced IPV. These benefits are of significance because they made it possible to identify points of intervention and prevention of IPV amongst marginalised South African women.

Key words: intimate partner violence, life history, narrative, intersectionality, context

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Chapter One

An Introduction

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a social and public health issue affecting women across different contexts and continents worldwide. Almost one third of women across the globe have experienced IPV according to the World Health Organisation (WHO), with this figure escalating to almost 40% in Africa (WHO, 2013). Although both men and women can be victims of IPV, it is more frequently women who are the primary targets of this act of violence, thus this study will focus on IPV against women (Anderson & Umberson, 2001; Jewkes, 2010; WHO, 2010).

The WHO (2012) defines IPV as behaviours within intimate relationships that cause physical, psychological or sexual harm to one's intimate partner. This includes emotional abuse and controlling behaviours, such as humiliation, intimidation and restricting one's partner's access to education, employment, finances and education. IPV often occurs in a private or domestic space and is a form of domestic violence (Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR), 2017). The definition of IPV is thus encompassed in the definition of domestic violence. The South African Domestic Violence Act No. 116 of 1998 defines domestic violence as encompassing physical, sexual, emotional, verbal and psychological and economic abuse. It also encompasses stalking, harassment, intimidation and controlling behaviours. Despite an incredibly progressive constitution that seeks to protect women against the full spectrum of abusive acts, IPV still remains unquestionably and pervasively high in South Africa (van Schalkwyk, Boonzaier, & Gobodo-Madikizela, 2014).

Violence against women in South Africa

The underreporting of gender-based violence (GBV) and a lack of regularly maintained official statistics related to this violence, make it difficult to report on accurate prevalence statistics of IPV against women in South Africa (CSVR, 2016; Rees, Zweigental & Joyner, 2014). There is, however, unwavering consensus within the literature that the level of IPV in South Africa is high (Baldwin-Ragaven, 2010; CSVR, 2016; Gupta, Silverman, Hemenway, Acevedo-Garcia, Stein & Williams, 2008; Dunkle, Jewkes, Brown, Yoshihama, Gray, McIntyre & Harlow, 2004; Matthews & Abrahams, 2001; Rees at al., 2014). A study by Abrahams, Jewkes, Laubscher and Hoffman (2006) in three Cape Town municipalities estimated that 42.3% of male participants had committed physical violence against a partner in the past 10 years. Although this figure is high, it may be an underestimate because it was

garnered from men who reported on their own violence. In a later study by Gender Links (2015), a high 78% of men in Gauteng and 41% of men in KwaZulu Natal admitted to being perpetrators of GBV. In the same Gender Links (2015) study on the prevalence of GBV in four provinces in South Africa, it was found that 36% of women in KwaZulu Natal, almost half (45%) of women in the Western Cape, half (51%) of women in Gauteng and a staggering three quarters (77%) of women in Limpopo reported experiencing IPV and violence outside of intimate relationships at least once in their lives. As alarming as these statistics may be, studies like these only indicate a prevalence rate of GBV and IPV in specific parts of South Africa rather than at the level of national rates. This makes the true extent of the problem unclear. The true burden of IPV in South Africa seems better gleaned from intimate partner homicide rates, which represents the most extreme outcome of IPV against women.

The statistics for intimate partner femicide (the killing of women by their intimate partners) provide considerable insight into the burden of IPV in South Africa (Abrahams, Matthews, Martin, Lombard & Jewkes, 2013). In 2000, IPV accounted for 62.4% of all deaths as a result of interpersonal violence in South Africa, where interpersonal violence is the second highest cause of life lost in the country (Norman et al., 2007). Over time, there has been no statistically significant decrease in intimate partner femicide rates between 1999 (8.8 per 100,000), which held the highest ever reported rate in the world, and 2009 (5.6 per 100,000) (Abrahams et al., 2013; Matthews, Abrahams, Martin, Vetten, van der Merwe & Jewkes, 2004). Thus, the title of Matthews et al.'s (2004) paper, "*Every 6 hours a woman is killed by her intimate partner"*, remains a stark reality in South Africa.

Although intimate partner femicide is the most extreme consequence of IPV, it is not the only outcome. Many quantitative studies have been conducted to explore the lived consequences of IPV in conjunction and relation to its potential causes and risks factors. These studies present an array of risk factors for IPV. These risk factors are by no means straightforward and contribute to the complex context within which IPV occurs (Jewkes, 2002; WHO, 2010). The WHO (2010) has identified and grouped the risk factors for IPV into individual, relationship, community and societal risk factors.

Individual and relationship level factors such as poverty, low level of income, alcohol abuse and dependence, and having witnessed parental violence as a child, are often cited as among the most common risk factors for perpetration and victimisation of IPV globally and in South Africa (Abrahams et al., 2006; Gass, Stein, Williams & Seedat, 2011; Jewkes, 2002;

Jewkes, Levin, Penn-Kekana, 2002; Rees et al., 2002; WHO, 2010). At a community and societal level, high rates of IPV in South Africa have often been linked to issues of gender inequality, women's subordinate position in communities and society, and the normative use of violence (Abrahams et al., 2006; CSVR, 2017; Jewkes et al., 2002; Jewkes, 2002; Rees et al., 2014; van Niekerk & Boonzaier, 2015). The consequences of IPV are also as multifactorial as the risk factors for IPV and range from physical health consequences, including an increased association and risk of HIV infection, to mental and psychological health concerns as well as social consequences (CSVR, 2016; Jewkes, Dunkle, Nduna & Shai, 2010; Mitchell, Wight, Van Heerden & Rochat, 2016; WHO, 2010; WHO, 2013). These consequences make women vulnerable to experiencing IPV and may lead to further marginalisation of women, especially those already marginalised by race and class. They may also reinforce inequalities between men and women and contribute towards the repeated, intergenerational cycle of IPV. Partner violence against women (VAW) is furthermore complicated by the complex history of violence and VAW in South Africa.

Although the statistics on IPV against women are alarming and increasing, South Africa is no stranger to interpersonal violence, (VAW) and IPV. It would be challenging to research and understand interpersonal violence in the country, without looking at the past because the 'culture of violence' witnessed today is said to have been shaped and influenced by the state sanctioned violence and social injustices of apartheid as well as earlier colonial influences (CSVR, 2016; Norman et al., 2007; Poltera, 2011). Jewkes (2002) suggested that IPV has been found to be more prevalent in societies where violence is common in political and conflict situations, such as in South Africa.

The high levels of interpersonal violence that continue to pervade South African society are commonly argued to have become a norm and an accepted way of resolving conflict between colleagues, parents and children, strangers or intimate partners, to name a few (Abrahams et al., 2006; Collins, 2013; CSVR, 2017; Jewkes et al., 2002; Jewkes, 2002; Norman et al., 2017; Rees et al., 2014). Thus, in the case of South Africa the pervasiveness of IPV needs to be understood and researched relative to the context within which it occurs.

Dubravka Šimonović, the United Nations special rapporteur on VAW said the following during a visit to South Africa in 2015:

> Despite an arsenal of progressive laws and policies to deal with gender-based violence put very ably in place, there has been little implementation, hence impact

> and gender-based violence continue to be pervasive and at the level of systematic women's human rights violation. I have heard on many occasions that violence against women is normalized in South Africa. The violence inherited from apartheid still resonates profoundly in today's South African society dominated by deeply entrenched patriarchal attitudes towards the role of women in society which makes violence against women and children an almost accepted social phenomenon (The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2015, para. 1-3)

These words could be used to summarise and highlight the ways in which VAW, including IPV is understood and dealt with in South Africa: as a product of the past, as an issue of gender inequality, as a normalised social and lived experience, and as something that the country, even at the level of policies and law, is not understanding, contextualising and managing well.

In sum, IPV is commonly argued to be an outcome of the broader socio-political and historical context within South Africa, including having amongst the highest rates of GBV in the world. (Armstrong, 1994; Poltera, 2011). IPV in South Africa thus ought to be researched and interrogated within a variety of contexts and contextual factors especially through acknowledging the lived contexts and life histories of women who have experienced IPV (Jewkes, 2002; van Niekerk & Boonzaier, 2015). Acknowledging the life histories and contexts of the women who have experienced IPV allows for a more nuanced understanding of IPV in South Africa. In turn, this would likely add to a better contextual understanding of the high levels of IPV and what can effectively be done about it (CSVR, 2017).

Aim of this research project

This project aimed to add to the growing work on narrative research on IPV survivors and to the shortage of life history research on IPV survivors. Through the use of life history methodology to explore the life contexts of survivors, this study aimed to provide a more holistic and contextual understanding of the emergence of IPV in South Africa, including the early and intersectional issues and risk factors for IPV, which could be significant in informing prevention mechanisms and programmes for IPV. This study also forms part of a larger project that aims to interrogate the dynamic, social and collective features of IPV, through studying the response networks of IPV survivors, perpetrators and witnesses and

practitioners, in different communities in Cape Town. It also aims to understand community norms around gendered violence and how this may influence the meanings that individuals construct around gendered violence. Finally, the larger project aims to inform developments of more context-specific intervention and prevention programmes against IPV and domestic violence, that will be applicable to the South African context and communities.

Thesis structure

The first chapter provided a brief introduction to the issue of IPV, the statistical picture of VAW and IPV, the global and local definitions related to IPV, and the risk factors and consequences of IPV. Chapter Two is a review of the literature pertinent to IPV in South Africa. The chapter first reviews the history of IPV and the ways in which it has been shaped by the country's socio-political history. The chapter then reviews the ways in which IPV has been qualitatively researched through narrative research and the importance of contextualising and taking IPV research forward through life history research. The chapter ends with this study's rationale, research question and aims. In Chapter Three, the methodology, the ethical and reflexive considerations applied to the project are discussed. The findings of this study and a discussion of the thematic narratives that emerged are presented in Chapter Four. In concluding the dissertation, Chapter Five includes a summary of the research findings, limitations of the study, and recommendations and suggestions for future IPV life history research.

Chapter Two

A Literature Review on the context of IPV in South Africa

This chapter will review the existing literature on IPV, beginning with the history of IPV in the South African context. A review of the ways in which IPV emerges and is understood will include a focus on the contextual gendered and socio-political history of IPV, as well as the normalised 'culture of violence' in South Africa. This chapter will review qualitative narrative research studies that have been used to understand IPV from a survivor perspective and the benefits thereof. The chapter will then provide a rationale for researching the context of IPV, namely the life histories of women who have experienced IPV, and how this kind of work can contribute towards understanding IPV in South Africa. Finally, the chapter will end with the presentation of the research question and specific study aims.

A history of IPV

South Africa's past under apartheid fostered a range of socioeconomic inequalities which are argued to still be evident more than two decades after the end of apartheid (Boonzaier & de la Rey, 2003; Jaga, Arabandi, Bagraim & Mdlongwa, 2018; Lamb & Snodgrass, 2013). Interpersonal violence was strongly perpetuated by race, class and gender inequalities during apartheid, which over time and continued displays of violence, interpersonal violence has become a normalised social experience through creation of a 'culture of violence' (Hamber, 2000; Cook-Huffman, 2002; Collins, 2013). This 'culture of violence' manifests as an issue of structural and gender inequalities (van Niekerk & Boonzaier, 2015). Thus, in the context of IPV the sustained race, class and particularly the gender inequalities and patriarchal culture created by apartheid are critical to review in order to form a contextual understanding of IPV in South Africa (Allen, 2018).

IPV within pervasive gender inequality. In order to understand the gendered and patriarchal aspects that contribute to GBV and IPV, an interrogation of the historical framings of South African masculinities is necessary, as well as how masculine identities were forged at the intersection of race, class and sexuality. Studies in South Africa have pursued an understanding of how men construct masculinities in different contexts (Gibbs, Sikweyiya & Jewkes, 2014; Hunter, 2010). Around the 1970s's to 1980's Hunter (2010) suggests that a traditional patriarchal masculinity was materialised amongst working class South African men. This masculine identity, which is argued to have become a hegemonic or dominant societal masculinity, was fostered by heterosexual patriarchy, which amongst other privileges

afforded men exceedingly greater opportunity (than women) for economic provision, which served as an opportunity for men to exert '*social control over women and children'* (Banks, 2011; Connell, 1999; Gibbs et al., 2014; Hunter, 2010). Thus, aside from apartheid state sanctioned violence being an explanation for high levels of interpersonal violence, the patriarchal culture within South Africa is what has been argued to explain high levels of IPV in the wake of apartheid (Boonzaier, 2018).

South African men's understanding of 'successful masculinity appears to be strongly linked to being economic providers within their families (Boonzaier, 2005). This is demonstrated in a recent study by Gibbs et al., (2014). The study set out to understand how young black South African men constructed masculine identity and respect, through in-depth individual interviews and three focus groups. The scholars suggest that the young men aspired to a patriarchal masculinity that prioritises men's economic power and the conferred control over women and children through controlling household finances and functioning (Gibbs et al., 2014). One of the ways that men in this study (and others) displayed their level of social control and power is through IPV and violence towards other men (Gibbs et al., 2014), which in South Africa is somewhat of a persistent norm stemming from apartheid. Similar to apartheid, where a race and gender order was distinct, black men were socioeconomically subordinate to white men and women and were not able to exert power or control within social spaces or receive much respect (Hunter, 2010). In such instances, and as was found in the study by Gibbs et al., (2014), to obtain the social positioning and control that men feel denied of in a patriarchal context, they often forcibly demand such respect and power through IPV and control over women.

The 'traditional', patriarchal hegemonic masculinity amongst men that emerged during the 1970's/80's apartheid out of race and gender inequality, still seems to exist within current day South Africa and is a key driver of IPV and men's domination over women and children and IPV. This is particularly because of the race and gendered socioeconomic inequality that continues to pervade South Africa and especially in marginalised and poor black communities (Boonzaier & de la Rey, 2003; Gibbs et al., 2014; Gibbs, Jewkes, Willan, Washington, 2018). However, this is not to say that IPV and violence against women does not occur in other contexts, besides poor and black communities. Boonzaier (2018) argues that existing GBV research problematically prioritises research with black and often poor participants, which builds on discourses that construct black men as the problematic perpetrators of VAW. Broadening the scope of research on VAW by including more affluent

and white participants and is recommended in order to demonstrate that VAW occurs within the context of patriarchal and gendered socioeconomic inequality and not solely gendered inequality within black communities (Gqola, 2007).

While economic inequality between men and women has been one of the main factors that has underpinned IPV since apartheid, the economic inequality gap between men and women has decreased, which has had an interesting outcome in relation to masculinity, men's power and IPV. Despite rampant unemployment rates and poverty, men and women are now afforded similar economic opportunities and income, and in some cases, women are the primary breadwinners in the family. In a contextual analysis of woman abuse in South Africa, Boonzaier (2005) found that where men were unemployed, and their female partners were the sole breadwinners, men experienced a lack of control and a sense of powerlessness, that was found to form justification for men's infidelity, sexual coercion and the exertion of power through IPV (Boonzaier, 2005).

Overall, key South African research has shown that in some instances where men may experience a lack of power and control in relationships, they may reassert their power through IPV perpetration against women. Thus, although IPV is underpinned by gendered economic inequality, it is not just the economic inequality that drives IPV but a culture of male entitlement and assertion of power and control in relationships, through violence. This can be argued to be part of a general patriarchal South African society that is riddled with a cultural legacy of justifications and normalisation of interpersonal violence, which has created a 'culture of violence' (Vetten, 2000; Hamber, 2000).

IPV within a longstanding 'culture of violence'. The effects of structural violence are suggested to be complex, profound and longstanding (Lamb & Snodgrass, 2013). In the case of South Africa, the effects of structural violence are still ongoing and pervasive (Boonzaier, 2005; Lamb & Snodgrass, 2013). Under apartheid, the country was plagued with interpersonal and state-sanctioned violence which was a morally and legally justified way of exercising power and control. Violence being morally and legally justified is said to have made it an accepted norm, which created a 'culture of violence' (Hamber, 2000; Lamb & Snodgrass, 2013; Poltera, 2011). The political violence perpetrated by the apartheid state was termed 'vertical violence' by Hamber (2000), as it was committed by those in power downwards to the citizens of South Africa. Vertical or structural state sanctioned violence occurred in the form of murder of apartheid opponents, haphazard arrests and detentions, torture and harassment (Cock, 1990; Hamber, 2000).

The rising frequency with which vertical violence occurred during apartheid, especially from the mid-1970's to the early 1990's fostered a normalising of violence. During this same period, and especially from the 1990's, 'horizontal violence' or interpersonal violence, some of which was covertly state orchestrated, began to rise (Hamber, 2000). Interpersonal violence was exacerbated by race, class and gender issues and inequalities as spoke to above. It is argued that against this background, a considerable degree of normalisation of violence is predictable and expected where the system, people and sociocultural values of society (such as male dominance over women) intersected to create the normalised 'culture of violence' evident in South African society today (Collins, 2013; Cook-Huffman, 2002; Hamber, 2000; Lamb & Snodgrass, 2013). Amongst intimate partners, IPV has become normalised, which is partially attributable to the gender inequalities discussed above as well as the normalisation of general interpersonal violence which began in apartheid and is a legacy of that time (Jewkes, 2002; Lamb & Snodgrass, 2013; Singh & Myende, 2017).

The CSVR (2017) agree that amongst other structural and social issues, '*the violent legacy of apartheid'* and the normalisation of violence is partially complicit in accounting for the persistence of interpersonal violence and VAW. This has been part of discourses that evaluate, assess and explain the persistence of VAW. However, they argue that these discourses and explanations for VAW have not produced substantive improvements in reducing VAW because VAW is not often viewed through the subjective lenses of the women who experience and survive VAW (CSVR, 2017). By exploring VAW and IPV through the perspectives of women who have experienced IPV, the CSVR (2017) postulates that more nuanced knowledge, contextual understandings and responses to the social and structural issues that continue to normalise and perpetuate high levels of IPV will emerge. In order to achieve this, in 2017 the CSVR (2017) seems to have spearheaded the first life history research on survivors of IPV in South Africa, to provide a better historical and contextual understanding of IPV.

In their study, the CSVR (2017) interviewed women from both rural and urban settings from four provinces (Gauteng, Limpopo, Free-State and KwaZulu-Natal) in South Africa using an in-depth life history approach and focus group discussions. The women's ages ranged from 18-54 and the sample consisted of 12 women for the life history interviews. All the women were black and from low socioeconomic backgrounds and communities. The CSVR (2017) discuss that understanding the persistence of VAW is complex and that more

interrogation is needed to explore each explanation for a more comprehensive understanding of the persistence of VAW in South Africa. Through the use of a life history approach, which allowed the context of VAW to emerge, the researchers uncovered that there are gaps in implementing interventions for VAW, because the perspective and ability of survivors are not often factored in. With consideration of survivor perspectives, the researchers argue that in order to address VAW, South Africa needs to ensure the successful and efficient implementation of existing laws and policies against VAW, rather than developing and implementing new ones. The researchers thereafter conclude that addressing the gaps in understanding the history and persistence of VAW requires more in-depth interrogation of existing explanations and that more effective interventions against VAW can be achieved through foregrounding women's narratives of VAW, through a life history approach (CSVR, 2017).

Contextualising IPV in South Africa through life history research

From the literature available on IPV in South Africa that has been presented thus far, it becomes clear that IPV is a complex gendered socio-political, historical and contextual issue. As the CSVR (2017) has argued, the knowledge that is produced on IPV as well as the understanding that we have of it should not exclude the important perspective and narratives of those who actually experience IPV. Life history research is postulated to provide a rich and better contextual understanding of IPV (CSVR, 2017). It provides the opportunity for the linking and intersection of the significant and untoward life events and experiences of the women to their wider social and environmental contexts (Adriansen, 2012; Riessman, 2001). Through looking back on their life history, and through the meanings that women ascribed to their experiences, women can give insight into how their earlier life experiences and context have shaped their experiences of abuse in later life. This provides researchers and psychologists with the opportunity to track and explore the contextual issues surrounding and leading up to IPV, from the perspective of those who have lived through IPV.

Life histories are argued to be more beneficial than structured surveys and other types of qualitative work in aiding recall of women's experiences of IPV and experiences of violence earlier in life (CSVR, 2017; Yoshihama & Bybee, 2011). Although there is growing recognition that research on IPV ought to shift from studying individualisation of survivors to more context-driven subjective explorations, little qualitative work has been done in the area of life history research with women survivors of IPV.

Wood (2001) interviewed 20 heterosexual women who had been in abusive intimate relationships using a narrative approach. The study was based in the United States of America and sought to uncover how women narrated on their experiences of IPV, with emphasis on uncovering whether or not the participants normalised their experiences of violence in romantic relationships and how they narrated this (Wood, 2001). Wood (2001) used an inductive analysis of in-depth interviews with the women. The women in the study had all narrated about the normalisation of men's dominance and superiority over women and positioned themselves within the narrative of women's dependence on men, both common gender narratives within western culture (Wood, 2001). The findings of the research suggested that a narrative approach allowed the sociocultural context in which IPV emerged and was normalised to be foregrounded. The finding that the participants had subjectively normalised their experiences of violence and how this occurred was particularly important because previous research had "accorded less attention to the voices of women than to the analysis of 'experts'" (p. 244) with regards to the normalisation of IPV (Wood, 2001). Thus, the use of narrative research in that context can be seen as having been powerful enough to confirm or discredit a particular understanding of IPV normalisation through the subjective perspective and voice of women who had experienced IPV.

In South Africa, research that has focused on understanding women's subjectivities as survivors of IPV has primarily used narrative approaches. This is an important trajectory in IPV survivor research as it places the women's agency and their subjectivity at the fore, where these women's narratives were once marginalised (Boonzaier, 2014; Boonzaier & van Schalkwyk, 2011; van Schalkwyk, Boonzaier & Gobodo-Madikizela, 2014).

In a South African based narrative research study, Boonzaier and van Schalkwyk (2011), demonstrate the benefits of using a narrative methodological approach in IPV work. The study involved examining the context of IPV amongst poor black women in South Africa by using a narrative methodological approach. Twenty-seven women from poor and marginalised areas in the Western Cape were interviewed about their experienced and lived realities of IPV. The researchers established that in narrating their stories, the women in the study were able to make sense and meaning of their experiences, which restores the agency of the women (Boonzaier & van Schalkwyk, 2011). Using a narrative approach also allowed for a rich, multidimensional and contextual understanding of the women's lived realities to emerge. This was a similar finding in narrative studies by van Schalkwyk and colleagues (2014) on the narratives of women leaving abusive relationships and by Boonzaier & de la Rey (2003) on women's constructions of gender identities that emerged as they narrated on

their experiences of violence. Thus, in this way, a narrative approach becomes beneficial for more than the women because it provides scholars with new and more socio-political ways of contextualizing and thinking about IPV, as it relates to issues of gender, poverty and an absence of social resources (Boonzaier & van Schalkwyk, 2011).

In a more recent study Gordon (2017) used a free-association narrative approach in studying women's stories of VAW. The study was based in Cape Town and involved 27 female university students. The young women highlighted narratives of fear and violence experienced by women in South Africa, as well as their resilience and acts of resistance to the adversity that South African women face. The use of a free-association type of narrative approach was beneficial in giving voice to women's agency and narratives of resistance and resilience in the face of violence, as well as how their identities are transformed as a result of the violent South African context that they live in (Gordon, 2017). Some scholars have argued that the representation of women as 'victims of patriarchy' presents them as passive victims and often neglects women's resistance to violence (Boonzaier & de la Rey, 2003; Geiger & Geiger, 2002; Hollander, 2002). The use of narrative approach gave the women in Gordon's (2017) study, and other similar studies, time and space for their subjective experiences of resistance and resilience to emerge. This is deemed important because it allows the narratives that speak to the person's particular truth about her context and experience of IPV to be broadcast; representing IPV as it truly occurs rather than what 'experts' or society believe about it (Geiger & Geiger, 2002; Wood, 2001).

All of the above mentioned narrative studies were viewed and interpreted within the broader social context in which they occurred, which is argued to be of importance because of the socio-political and socio-ecological context in which IPV operates (Boonzaier & de la Rey, 2003; Gordon, 2017; Wood, 2001). In line with this, MacIntyre (1984, p. 221) stated that "…[one's] life is always embedded in the stories of those communities from which [one] derive[s] [their] identity". Thus, a life history approach is thought to be suitable in its ability to foreground the socio-political contextual features of IPV. Furthermore, a full life context of women who have experienced IPV can be brought out by the life history approach and may aid in better understanding the context in which IPV emerges in South Africa.

In the previously mentioned qualitative life history study on IPV survivors conducted by the CSVR (2017), some women are said to have continuously referred to and compared the childhood and family background of perpetrators to their own, as key in explaining the vicious cycle of VAW. Women survivors also narrated on experiences of violence prior to

their adulthood, where adulthood IPV experiences are usually the only focus of IPV experience studies (CSVR, 2017). As shown by this South African study, life histories allow the researcher to explore both the adulthood as well as the childhood life context of a survivor of IPV. This is important because quantitative studies have shown that IPV is associated with aspects of violence in the childhood and lived experiences of survivors of IPV (Abrahams et al., 2006, CSVR, 2017, Gass et al., 2011; Jewkes et al., 2002) and in a recent study focused on IPV risk factors in Asia and the Pacific (Jewkes, Fulu, Naved, Chirwa, Dunkle, Haardörfer, Garcia-Moreno, 2017). This study found that witnessing abuse and the childhood trauma associated with it is an important risk factor for IPV and holds the potential for the normalising of IPV. This could be important to explore in South Africa, where violence is pervasive and normalised in and out of the home (Jewkes et al., 2017). The potential value and importance of life history studies is thus highlighted through such findings.

Life history methodologies do not seem to be widely used in qualitative studies with women. However, theoretical discussions and reviews of some earlier uses of life history methods have shown significant benefits worth noting. Sosulki, Buchanan and Donnell (2010) demonstrated the benefits of combining feminist narrative analysis and life history methods to contextualise black American women's lived experiences with mental illness. They found that the use of life history methods helped to emphasise holism and comprehensiveness in the experiences and perspectives of women (Sosulki et al., 2010). The use of the method has similarly been noted to emphasise the subjectivities of women as survivors of IPV (Adriansen, 2012; Kouritzin, 2000; Smith, 2012; Sosulki et al., 2010).

Through the emphasis on the subjective experiences, narrative and especially life history methodologies are argued to challenge and inform new theories that bring about new insights, by uncovering previously unexplored dynamics and complexities of women's experiences and their life course in general (Kouritzin, 2000; Smith, 2012). This would be particularly important in the case of comprehensively understanding IPV and informing prevention and intervention programmes for IPV in South Africa.

The dearth of qualitative work and specifically life history methodology research around IPV in South Africa is often attributed to the sensitivity of women's experiences and the psychological risks associated with recounting their experiences of violence (CSVR, 2017). Jewkes and her colleagues, who are said to conduct most of the epidemiological and quantitative work around VAW, have suggested that adequate training and supervision in the field could combat these risks (CSVR, 2017; Jewkes et al., 2002). These in-depth qualitative

studies are even more desirable, because of the limitations and lack of official statistics surrounding VAW and IPV (Jewkes et al., 2002). As it was expressed in the CSVR (2017) report:

> Often when people tell their story, it is linear, rational and coherent – it becomes 'one' life. But we live many lives and, by using life histories method, we make room for these different lives, for the different stories and their contexts. (p. 27)

Thus, life history methodologies could help in shifting the conceptualisation of IPV from individual characteristics to account for a more critical and broader assessment of the social, cultural and historical context from which IPV experiences emerge (Liang, 2005). This is anticipated to aid in informing more socio-politically relevant, contextual, holistic and effective intervention and prevention methods against IPV. In light of this anticipation and the review of the literature presented here, the rationale, research question and aims of this study follow on.

Rationale

This research project aimed to add to the scarcity of IPV life history research in South Africa, through exploring the whole life contexts of women survivors of IPV and their experiences of IPV. The research aimed to build on the growing narrative area of work on IPV through life history research, which will allow for greater understanding of the intersectional and contextual issues related to IPV its emergence and consequences, as noted in the literature review. It is hoped that through this kind of research, the findings will also assist in developing comprehensive and context-specific early identification and intervention programmes for IPV. The WHO (2010) has commented on the surprisingly few endeavours to prevent IPV at a primary prevention level, which could, if effectively designed and implemented, reduce the burden of IPV with regards to human suffering, economic and public health costs. Considering this, and in tandem with the broader study that this research will be part of, it was hoped that the use of life history research will help to identify early risk factors for IPV and contextualise this violence to better inform the inception of context-specific intervention and prevention programmes for IPV in South Africa.

Research question and aims

How do survivors of IPV narrate about their lives and experiences of IPV within the context of their life stories as a whole?

The research question sought to uncover the following five specific research aims:

- To explore the background and current lived experiences of South African women who have experienced IPV
- To explore the survivor's subjective perspective and experience of IPV
- To understand the full life context of IPV survivors at the intersections of race, class and gender.
- To build on narrative and life history methodology research on IPV survivors
- To understand the early identifiable risk factors for IPV from a survivor perspective

Chapter Three

Methodology

Theoretical framework: Intersectional analysis

Previous research has found that IPV is linked to issues of patriarchy and gender inequality and IPV comes to manifest through the intersection of the personal and wider societal, economic, cultural, political and historical context in which women live (Abrahams et al., 2006; Jewkes et al., 2002; Rees et al., 2014; van Niekerk & Boonzaier, 2015). Boonzaier and de la Rey (2003) argue that the analysis of VAW in South Africa must acknowledge the multiple contexts and gendered dynamics in which it takes place. It would thus be imperative to frame this IPV study and analyse the findings of it at the multiple levels and intersections at which IPV has been found to occur. The findings of this research will thus be analysed and interpreted through an intersectional lens., which is rooted in black feminist thought.

The term intersectionality was coined by legal scholar, Crenshaw (1989). In a subsequent paper, Crenshaw (1991) uses examples of legal cases around violence against black women to demonstrate how the lens of intersectionality can be used to locate the appropriate sources and solutions to overcome a particular problem. Intersectionality is based on the notion that the lived experiences of people are shaped by the intersections of different identities and different systems of oppression (Crenshaw, 1991; Collins, 1990). The social identity categories at the core of intersectionality are often those of race, class, gender, age and sexuality (Crenshaw, 1991; Collins, 1990). The intersection of these identities, particularly for black women, inform "interlocking systems of oppression" (Collins, 1993) which consequently influences a woman's life chances and perspective than any one form of social oppression (Meer & Müller, 2017). Two forms of intersectionality – structural intersectionality and political intersectionality - are often implicit in producing oppression, subordination and a system of domination of black women, of which IPV is a result (Crenshaw, 1991). These types of intersectionality are thus relevant to the analysis and discussion of this study.

Structural intersectionality and political intersectionality speak to the forms of intersectionality that occur when social and political structures create intersections between race, class and gender that subordinate, exclude and marginalise to the most degree, poor black women (Crenshaw, 1991). Structural intersectionality speaks to the organisation of social groups by their social identities and the subsequent and unintended production of

negative effects on the social group. The example that Crenshaw (1991) uses to illustrate structural intersectionality is that of battered women who end up in women's shelters in Los Angeles. The women who ended up in the shelters were mostly black women who had been survivors of violence, were often unemployed, of working class and lacking job skills. Crenshaw (1991) argues that the violence that these women experienced is an immediate outcome of the subordination they face. Ending up in a shelter is also a manifestation of race, class and gender oppression where poor black women face the most difficulty in acquiring employment, housing, and support from their communities who are also likely to be unemployed and lacking stable housing (Crenshaw, 1991). Race, class and gender systems thus converge and intersect in black women's experiences of violence, to bring about the subordination of black women and the reproduction and perpetuation of a "matrix of domination" (Collins, 1990). Within this matrix, the systems of race, class and gender most profoundly affect black women (Collins, 1990); the oppression does or not occur along one axis or system of oppression, but through an interlocking matrix like manner (Collins, 1990; Crenshaw, 1991; Gouws, 2017). Political intersectionality on the other hand, can be understood to manifest when political movements focus on seeking justice for different social groups along different axes and intersections of oppression, but often to the exclusion of black women (Crenshaw, 1991). Crenshaw (1991) illustrates that this often occurs when political movements and discourses do not account for the full depth and breadth of sexism and racism, when they address issues of "women" and "people of colour", without acknowledging the intersections of race and gender, the two social groups that black women are subordinated in. By not acknowledging the intersection of race and gender, the marginalisation of black women is continued and unquestioned.

Black women in South Africa most likely represent the most marginalised group of people in South Africa (Boonzaier & van Schalkwyk, 2011). The social identities of black women intersect to form an "entanglement of inequalities" (Roth, 2013), where they then find themselves marginalised and within a matrix of subordination and domination, which for many women in South Africa is experienced through IPV. Thus, framing the study through intersectionality coupled with narrative analysis is an essential framework from which to analyse the full context of the lived experiences of women who have experienced IPV in South Africa as it allowed for capturing of their lives in a holistic and contextual manner.

Study Design

Qualitative research method. This research was conducted through a qualitative research approach, which allows for comprehensive participant-generated data (Wilson & MacLean, 2011; Willig, 2001). Qualitative interviews are a particularly sensitive and effective technique for capturing the experiences and subjective meanings of participants' everyday worlds (Kvale, 1996). This was particularly important for this project as it aimed to understand the context of the lives of survivors of IPV from the perspective of the survivors and the meanings they made of their experiences. The complexities of the experience of IPV and the contextual factors surrounding each participant's life, were anticipated to be more comprehensively and freely expressed through qualitative research.

Life history approach. This research aimed to explore the context of IPV survivors through a qualitative life history approach (Ojemark, 2007). The life history interview approach is one form of 'narrative interview' that has different meanings and implications related to and depending on the research aim and purpose (Adriansen, 2012; Payne & Payne, 2004). One of the approaches to conducting life history research involves uncovering the societal context of the lives of participants (Goodson & Sikes, 2001). With the appropriate interview questioning and analysis, this life history approach allows for the holistic picture of a person's life to be understood by relating significant life events to their wider historical, social, environmental and political contexts (Adriansen, 2012; Goodson & Sikes, 2001). Through '(re)telling one's story' (Kiguwa, 2006, p. 15), the teller is able to establish a sense of order to their experiences and make sense and meaning of their experiences.

Participants of life history research are invited to share their experiences and significant life events often with reference to a specific issue (Payne & Payne, 2004). Participants are also invited to share their narratives as located within the interpersonal and social environment in which narratives occurred (Payne & Payne, 2004). This speaks to the emphasis on context and holism within the life history approach. The exploration of context is thus central to the life history approach by Goodson and Sikes (2001) and is one of its major strengths (Adriansen, 2012). Another strength of the life history approach is that it privileges *subjectivity* over objectivity, further emphasising the viewpoint of participants as is the aim of qualitative research generally and this research specifically (Kvale, 1996; Riessman, 2001). This study also aimed to explore and document the life context of women who have experienced IPV, making the qualitative life history method a fitting approach. Of the main challenges of using the life history method include that it is time consuming which is often said to affect sampling and participant commitment to the amount of time needed to

conduct the interviews (Byrne, 2017; Goodson & Sikes, 2001). The life history interviews also pose a challenge in that they can elicit strong emotions for participants, which can blur the lines between a life history interview and a therapeutic interview as there is an overlap in the approach (Byrne, 2017). Thus, Byrne (2017) advises the importance of keeping the objective of the research in mind, while still being sensitive to the participants emotions. These challenges and how they manifested in the research process will be discussed further in the data collection and reflexivity sections.

Research context and sample recruitment

The initial proposed sample size for this research was between 10 and 15 self-identified women survivors of IPV, who were 18 years or older. This sample size was anticipated to provide rich data for a comprehensive analysis as well as to begin to broaden the scope and applicability of the findings of this study. Purposive sampling is used when a study has a specific purpose which can only be achieved by sampling and studying a specific group of people (Babbie, 2016). As this research explored the experiences and life histories of a specific group of individuals, a purposive sampling technique was used to recruit participants (Babbie, 2016).

Access to the sample of women for this study was gained through one Cape Town shelter that provides support to abused women and their children.

An internet search was done for shelters in Cape Town that accommodate abused women. Three such shelters were then approached. Through phone calls and mainly email communication, initial meetings with the social workers and/or the managers of the shelters were arranged. During these introductory meetings, we were introduced to the shelters/organisation structure and shared our proposals. All three shelters agreed for us to have information sessions with the women at the shelters, however only two were held, as communication lapsed with the third shelter. Subsequently, there was also a communication lapse with the third shelter, and thus full partnership and collaboration was only established with one of the women's shelters.

The shelter where the research was conducted was based in a residential area of racially diverse middle-class suburb. The shelter houses abused, destitute and pregnant women and their young children and have space for 21 women and their children. Abused women live there on a short-term basis and are required to participate in counselling, group work, the life skills training program that the shelter offers, spiritual guidance and are offered opportunities for training in a few occupational fields such as home-based care and waitressing. The women are also involved in the running of the home, which is said to

encourage their sense of accountability and responsibility in order to empower them. The children are enrolled in the shelter's creche/children's programme, which provides education and care as well as counselling to the children.

The appropriate partnership and collaboration with this organisation made access to the final sample of women safe and easily manageable within the time and resource constraints for this project. Due to a few limitations which will be elaborated on in a later section, only 11 participants were sampled from one shelter. As each participant was interviewed twice, the total number of interviews were 22 interviews. The interviews were conducted through a team effort by the researcher of this study and by another postgraduate student researcher.

Sample description

With regards to the demographics of the sample, the ages of the 11 participants ranged between 21 and 41. Eight of the participants identified themselves as Coloured[1], two as African and one as White. Thus, the study was mostly comprised of black[2] women. All of the participants had reached at least Grade 10, four had fully completed their high school education and three of those four had attained some form of tertiary education. The participants appeared to struggle to describe their financial standing. This was most likely due to the fact that they were living in a shelter and/or that most of them were unemployed and dependent on other persons to take care of their basic and everyday financial needs. Only three of the 10 women were employed (part-time), while the rest described financial difficulties, having no income, relying on grants, donations and contributions by family members. One participant described herself as married, one as divorced, five as having a partner, and four as single. For more detail on the participants, a participant biographical sketch is available (see Appendix F).

[1] The term 'coloured' is used as it refers to a group of people in South Africa that are descendants of Khoisan, African and Asian populations, who were integrated into the Cape colonial society (Adhikari, 2006). The term is not used in an essentialist manner or to reproduce fixed racial categories inscribed by the apartheid government.

[2] In this study the term 'black' is used in its broad sense, referring to coloured, Indian and African people who live in South Africa.

Data collection

Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the University of Cape Town's Psychology Department Ethics Committee and by the University of Cape Town's Humanities Faculty Board. Thereafter, the research team began to approach and make contact with organisations in Cape Town that provide shelter and support to women who have been abused. Information sessions were arranged and held at two organisations. The information sessions were organised by the respective social workers at each organisation. The information sessions served as an introduction of the researchers and the research study.

Brief information sheets were handed out to the women present (See Appendix A). The women were informed that their willingness to participate or not would not affect their relationship with the shelter. After the information sessions, a working relationship was established with one of these organisations. The women were allowed a few days to consider their participation in the study and once confirmed, asked to sign up for their first interviews with their respective social workers. The social workers provided the researchers with the names of the women as well as the proposed meeting times for the first interviews.

Individual interviews were conducted in privately arranged rooms at the shelter. At the first interview the consent form (see Appendix B) was read and explained to the individual participants. After obtaining consent from participants, the demographic forms were filled in (See Appendix C). The questions and answer options were read to the participants, and their verbal responses were recorded on the forms. However, some participants elected to fill in the demographic form themselves. Thereafter, the interviews commenced, with the use of an interview schedule as a guide (See Appendix E).

Semi-structured interviews were used to collect the data. Using this method of interviewing allows the overall research question and aims to drive the interview, while using some open-ended questions to avoid diversion from the research questions and to obtain adequate data to address the research aims (Willig, 2001). Semi-structured interviews also allow the researcher to listen to how participants express particular aspects of their life experiences and allows them to do so as freely as possible (Willig, 2001). Thus, through semi-structured interviews the researcher can maintain the structure of the interviews while the participants regulate the information that they present in their responses (Corbin & Morse, 2003). Along with sensitive rapport building, a good balance between these two aspects make for a successful semi-structured interview (Corbin & Morse, 2003; Willig, 2001). The semi-structured interviews were additionally framed by the life history interviewing approach.

Each participant was interviewed twice as this research aimed to elicit an in-depth as possible life history from each participant. In conducting life history interviews Adriansen (2012) suggests that by asking about significant life events first, the context surrounding these events and their unfolding can be explored in relation to one another. In the case of this study, the significant life event in question was the participants' experiences of IPV and its context, which was explored in the first interview. This was followed by uncovering details of any other significant relationships with men and other experiences of violence or abuse in the lives of participants. The details of these experiences took up the full length of time of the first interview, for most of the participants. The second interview went deeper into the life history and context of participants' lives, including their family background, childhood upbringing, education, support systems and ending with the details of their current lived experiences and context. The overall aim of this second interview was to explore and understand the participants' experiences and full life context as well as how their contexts at different stages of their lives may have implicated each other.

Life history interviews are often said to take up many hours over a considerable number of sessions (Byrne, 2017; Goodson & Sikes, 2001). Goodson and Sikes (2001) thus advise that participants in life history research should be informed that the nature of the research often requires many hours of interview time. However, because of the time constrains of this study, the number of interviews and their allocated times were limited to two interviews per participant, with each interview lasting no more than hour. The time period between the two interviews was no more than one week and was mostly dependent on the availability of the participants and researchers. This break also allowed participants some time for reflection on the first interview, leaving room for them to provide more detail and insight on their experiences during the second interview.

Voice recording equipment was used to capture the data in the interviews, which were then transcribed by the researchers. The interviews and transcripts were then analysed.

Data Analysis

The analysis of data began soon after the first round of interviews were completed. The analysis began with familiarising myself with the data by listening to the recordings once or twice each before transcribing the interviews. Listening to and transcribing the interviews are the first and important way in which to familiarise oneself with the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Riessman, 1993). Narrative analysis has been identified as one of the most commonly used approaches to analysing life histories (Ojemark, 2009). Narrative analysis was thus the

proposed method of data analysis prior to the data collection. However, as the researcher familiarised herself with the data, it became apparent that a thematic narrative approach would be a more appropriate analytic approach, as a number of common themes within the participants narratives were identifiable. The data was thus analysed through a combination of Braun and Clarke's (2006) six step thematic analysis approach and Riessman's (2008) thematic narrative analysis approach, as well as a few narrative analysis techniques.

Thematic narrative analysis. Analysing the data for themes is the first step in thematic or thematic narrative analytic approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Ronkainen, Watkins, & Ryba, 2016). In analysing the data for themes, Braun and Clarke's (2006) method of identifying themes within qualitative data was used. This analysis involved familiarising myself with the data through listening to the recordings, transcribing and reading the transcripts a number of times, inductive analysis and coding, searching for themes and sub-themes, drawing out key themes that held the most noteworthy narratives and the defining and naming of these final select themes. This allowed for the capturing of the variation and range of important and broad patterned responses across the narratives of participants (Riessman, 2008).

In thematic narrative analysis, emphasis is given to "the told" within the narratives. The form of the narrative as well as the choice of language and structure of select narratives is given minimal emphasis (Riessman, 2008). For this reason, the excerpts presented in the results and discussion chapter have been "cleaned up" for easy reading and to make "the told" more visible. That said however, thematic narrative analysis does leave room for the analysis and interpretation of language choice, symbols and metaphors in as far as they assist in bringing the underlying narrative to the fore (Riessman, 2008).

The interpretation of language choice, symbols and metaphors and the interpretation of narratives within a thematic narrative approach, are often those of the researcher, and the meaning of a narrative is not assumed to be embedded within the narrative (Wiles, Rosenberg & Kearns, 2005). The researcher's presence in the interpretive context is prominent but is absent in the constituting of the stories and their meanings, which is in contrast to a traditional narrative analysis approach where co-construction of narratives and their meanings between participant and researcher are prominent (Riessman, 2008). This further emphasises that content and the purpose of the narrative (Riessman, 2008) rather than how the narrative is told, is of focus in thematic narrative analysis. In this way, thematic narrative analysis does

away with some of the tenets of a traditional narrative analysis approach. However, for life history research, the foregrounding of participants' "subjective and personal meanings and experiences" is one of the life history objectives and strengths (Germetern, 2013, p. 612). A traditional narrative analysis is also able to capture this subjectivity by paying attention to the particularities of the participants' narratives and their meanings (Shukla, Wilson & Body, 2014; Riessman, 2008). Narrative analysis provides the necessary tools to foreground the agency and subjectivity of participants' narratives (Riessman, 1993). When life histories are analysed through narrative analysis, the voice and viewpoint of the participant emerges clearly. In a 2016 study by Ronkainen et al., the uses of 'traditional" thematic analysis and narrative analysis ensured that the voices of participants and their interpretations of the narratives were not suppressed, which can occur in a thematic narrative approach. Thus, some interpretation of the narratives employed narrative analysis techniques which allowed the subjective voices and interpretations of the participants' narratives to be heard and the important contexts in which the narratives occurred to be analysed. Close attention to the analysis of the words of participants allows the contextual nature of the experiences and narratives of IPV survivors to emerge (Ojemark, 2009; Wiles et al., 2005). Understanding subjective experience and perspective of IPV survivors and their life context was a focus of this study and thus the aspects of narrative analysis mentioned above were drawn upon in the analysis of the data.

Ethical Considerations

This section will cover the ethical issues that were considered for this study, which includes informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity, and ending with the risks and benefits that were associated with participating in this study.

Informed consent. Once a working relationship was established with the shelter staff, an information session was held at the shelter. The information session was focused on providing the organisation and the women with details of this study. The consent forms (see Appendix B) and the process of providing informed consent was explained to the women present at the information session. The women were given a space to ask questions of clarification about the study and about consent. At the first interview the consent forms were read and explained to the individual participants. The consent forms indicated that participants gave the researchers permission to record the interviews and to use the interview data for academic purposes, which includes sharing of the data with the research team

(including one Honours student and two supervisors). Participants were informed of the option to decline answering specific questions and the option to withdraw from the study at any time, with no negative consequences. In tandem with this, the participants were informed that neither their participation in the research process nor any decisions to withdraw from the research, would affect their relationship or services provided by the shelter.

Confidentiality. As this research dealt with highly personal and sensitive information, confidentiality and the assurance of confidentiality to participants was paramount. All identifying information was changed in the transcripts in order to maintain anonymity and confidentiality – the researcher assigned pseudonyms for the purpose of writing up the research. However, it must be mentioned that there are limits in maintaining confidentiality in research of this kind. Anonymity and confidentiality are often viewed as being closely related, but there are important differences between them that must be noted (Novak, 2014). Anonymity involves concealing any personal identifiers of participants. Confidentiality involves concealing all participant data, not only their identifying information, making confidentiality a higher standard of anonymity (Novak, 2014; Marx, 1999). As the data generated from this research is quoted in the results and discussion, publications and the like, it is difficult to fully maintain participant confidentiality. To safeguard against this unavoidable limitation in confidentiality, anonymity will be maintained at the highest standard possible.

The interviews were conducted in a private room at the shelter. The recordings and transcripts were stored on password protected devices, where they were only accessible by the researcher. The data was shared with the rest of the research team through password-protected files and if need be, any physical records of the interviews were kept in a locked file-cabinet.

Risks and benefits. The data and findings of this research and the broader research project that it is tied to were anticipated to be useful in informing more context-specific intervention and prevention programmes for IPV in South Africa. Although participants in this research may not immediately and directly benefit from these programmes, their contribution to any significant change in the ways in which IPV is perceived and managed can never be overlooked. If they so wish, it would be beneficial to inform participants of the general findings of this research project as well as any publications, changes and implementations that will be informed by the project findings.

As a participatory token of appreciation, the women were given grocery vouchers to the value of R200 for the two interviews they participated in.

The risks in participating in this research were minimal. The participants did become emotional during different points in the interviews. Some found it difficult and painful to speak through their experiences of IPV and particularly their life histories. However, none of the participants expressed any marked psychological or emotional distress and despite some moments being painful to speak through, almost all of the participants found the interviews beneficial to them in one way or another. Scholars have noted that the long-term benefits of talking about the IPV experience outweigh any short-term emotional reactions and negative consequences (Griffin, Resick, Waldorp, Mechanic, 2003; Valpied, Cini, O'Doherty, Taket, Hegarty, 2014) This has been found to be the case even in recent (3 weeks) experiences of traumatic events (Griffin et al., 2003), and seemed to have been the case for the participants in this study. The women in this study expressed the benefits and perceived benefits that they experienced by taking part in the life history interviews, as evidenced in a few extracts below:

> Interviewer: …do you have anything you'd like to add before we end off?
> Shanaaz: I'm just…I have one thing. I am grateful for you. For allowing me to speak about things that I haven't spoken about in quite some time.
> Interviewer: Mm-hm.
> Shanaaz: And it's good to talk about it and… I'm glad for you.

> Interviewer: Okay. So, in the last interview we spoke about your experience of violence. We spoke about uhm, your marriage and your relationships. Uhm, how did you feel about that interview?
> Yas: I feel very good about it because I, I talked to someone and someone didn't judge me. They just listened…That's just…It was very strange talking about it…but I talked about it...
> Interviewer: Why do you think it was strange?
> Yas: Because who can listen to my mad stories…My stupid stories and what I went through but actually it makes me realise, if I tell my story, people do listen.

> Interviewer: How did you feel about that interview?
> Leah: For me it was uh, it was good.
> Leah: I felt good after talking, you know?
> Interviewer: Mm-hm.
> Leah: Especially if you talk to the right person, then I just feels good and right at the same time. Because you don't always get to…sometimes get to talk, just to…you don't wanna talk to anybody…But it just felt good and right at the same time. And uh, it was a bit of a healing for me as well. A release.

> Interviewer: We've spoken about quite a lot.
> Sibo: It's been a pleasure…It's been a pleasure…I felt like when you asked us like, okay are there any people that want to do the interview…I felt like I wanna be a part of it because I want to share my story because it might inspire someone.
> Interviewer: Mm. Mm. And we appreciate that.

Where the participants did seem distressed, they were offered a break from the interview or the option to withdraw. None elected to withdraw, opting to rather take a brief break from the interviews while they composed themselves. At the end of the interviews, participants were asked if they needed a referral to the social workers, but none of them expressed a need for counselling sessions. A resource list for other avenues of counselling and information on IPV was also made available to participants (See Appendix E). No other costs to participants were noted.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity can be described as a researcher's constant analysis and account of their influence in a research project, and the depth of reflexivity depends on the different methodological and theoretical approaches assumed for the study (Dowling, 2012). Acknowledging and reflecting upon the researcher's subjective and contextual factors that may influence the research process is an important aspect of qualitative research (Wilson & Maclean, 2011).

Qualitative research interviews are largely a dialogical space where researchers play an active role in the production of data from interviews (Boonzaier, 2014; Riessman, 2008). Reflexivity should acknowledge the identity and subjectivity of the researcher throughout the research process, so as to not create distance from the work and feign neutrality of the researcher (Willig, 2001). The qualitative researcher can therefore be argued to be "a part of the research findings" (Huysamen, 2013, p. 50) and "an active presence" (Riessman, 2008, p. 105) in the data. As this research used a narrative analytic approach, the analysis of the data should account for the presence of the researcher in the reciprocity and co-construction of the participants' narratives and in the meanings that both researcher and participants made from the narratives (Dowling, 2012). The co-construction of narratives and meanings are suggested to occur between researchers and participants in qualitative life history and narrative research (Adriansen, 2012; Phoenix, 2008; Squire, 2013). The researcher's subjectivity and reflections are then a vital resource within the research process.

My identity as a black woman, my class, and gender came to the fore within a few of the interviews and may have shaped the dynamics of some of the interviews and the co-construction of the women's narratives. Being of the same gender as the participants seemed to make it seamless for them to share their narratives with me, no matter how explicit.

However, when they spoke of men in society in a negative light, I felt that I could not disagree with them or challenge them. I responded with abrupt phrases, such as "Yes", "Right" or simply said "Mm" and found myself quickly moving on to different topics. I think that I felt this way because they had shared their vivid and negative experiences at the hands of men and that disagreeing or challenging their negative perceptions of men (and especially the men who had abused them) may have been perceived as taking the "abusers" side. I thought that challenging their perceptions could have affected our rapport. Excerpts from my interviews with Nadine [3]and Shanaaz provide examples of such occurrences:

> Nadine: …And I told you I don't wanna be in any relationships because all guys are the same.
> René: Ja.

> Shanaaz: …one day we can teach our children the different ways of how life is, how guys can be some…cause there is good guys in the world. 10% good guys…but just to prepare them for life…
> Interviewer: Mm.

In occurrences such as these, I neglected to interrogate what comments like "all guys are the same" and that there are only "10% good guys" in the world. My subtle unintentional complicity in their generalisations of men (even when I did not agree with the women) kept the interviews running smoothly. Regardless of how beneficial this was, it may have hindered the co-construction of a range of narratives of GBV and IPV, such as how it affected the participants' perceptions of men in the aftermath of IPV and throughout their life course. With minimal input from my end, the "co-constructed" narrative then became the generalisations of men. However, these constructions of men could also be interpreted as the women's way of resisting victim blaming and as exercising power in the narratives that they would like to have constructed of women victims and male perpetrators. Perhaps this was their way of expressing that GBV and IPV is predominantly perpetrated by men, and that IPV is a product of something that male perpetrators do, rather than about what women ought to do to prevent it; in other words, that blame be shifted to men rather than to women. Nadine and Shanaaz both simultaneously seem to have tried to convey their sense of agency and power in deciding to no longer to be in relationships (Nadine) and for Shanaaz, in how she now has the "power" to prepare her children for life and what they might face in relationships with men. In a way, and as Boonzaier and van Schalkwyk (2011) found in their study, the

[3] All participants and persons they refer to have been assigned pseudonyms

narratives enabled the women to verbalise the complexities and dualities between agency and blame, power and powerlessness. Upon reflecting on these moments, I realise that it would have been beneficial to continue to listen to the constructions that the women brought to the fore about men and men perpetrators of IPV. This could have enabled them to take the narratives further to allow more of their agency and power over their narratives of male perpetrators and IPV to be exercised. In the theme of *Normalisation of IPV experiences: The effects of withdrawal from support,* similar narratives of agency and blame, power and powerlessness come to the fore and were analysed under theories of normalisation of IPV and the effects of being withdrawn from support. Perhaps having analysed the narratives or normalisation further for moments of resistance and agency would have brought the complexities of blame, power/powerlessness to the fore, in a way that would have further given power to the women and their resistances to IPV.

In reflecting on my race and ethnicity as a black African woman and how it may have played a part in the co-construction of the narratives in this study, one (black African) participant in particular made explicit mention of race and how some of her experiences were framed through the intersection of her race and gender. At times, it came across as she expected me to understand and agree with her when she spoke of some of black African people and black African women and children's experiences. I think that this could be interpreted as how comfortable she felt in sharing her life history with me, because of our similar ethnicities. In particular, she comfortably shared a narrative of her feelings and experiences of racial and ethnic discrimination at the shelter, which I do not think she would have shared with me had I been of a different race and ethnicity from her.

Upon reflecting on differences, a major difference between the participants and I was our class and educational background. When some of the women narrated on their lower levels of educational attainment, class and financial difficulties, I felt somewhat guilty for my privileges and having more in the way of finances and education. I became uncomfortable to talk about these issues. This was first manifested when the participants were filling in the demographic form, where it required them to state their level of income and household situation. In retrospect, I realised that I gave very short answers to the participants when issues of class, employment and education came to the fore. I reflect on this as a defence for me and/or them becoming uncomfortable. Although much was gleaned regarding their economic and financial standing, this could have opened up more of a space to talk about what employment and a higher level of education actually meant for them in relation to IPV

and their life history in general. It could have also opened up more dialogue about where education intersects with their experiences.

On a final reflective note, the time frame and limited scope within which this study needed to be completed, may have consciously and subconsciously affected how far I interrogated the participants on some of the narratives they presented. I felt constantly aware of the time and whether or not I felt that the participants had provided enough data to answer the research question. In some cases, I went to the next question, leaving loose ends in a previous answer or narrative because I wanted to ask a question that I felt would draw out the 'relevant' data. In the recommendations section, I will offer important recommendations for carrying out life history research linked to this final reflection.

These reflections, although recognising some significant shortfalls on the part of the researcher, have brought light and consciousness to the importance of qualitative researchers (especially novice researchers) acknowledging the influence of their identity and subjectivity on the research and their very active presence within the research.

Chapter Four

Life Histories of IPV survivors

This chapter presents the findings of the thematic narrative analysis of the life histories and experiences of IPV survivors. The main question that the analysis set out to answer was how women who have experienced IPV narrate about their lives and experiences from a perspective of their life histories. As the life histories were analysed, commonalities between the sociocultural, political and historical issues that frame the context of IPV emerged from the narratives of the participants. This saw the emergence of important themes from the narratives. In this chapter, the captured narrative themes will be presented systematically in terms of the chronological age of the participants because of the sequential unfolding of significant narratives and events in the lives of the participants. This is also in keeping with a distinctive feature of narration, which is that it is often framed within a succession of events, with one event leading to the next (Riessman, 2003; Squire, 2013). The progressive recitation of events is said to be telling of the narrator's objective (Murray, 2003; Riessman, 2008). Furthermore, narratives are characterised by a specific start, middle and end with a theme that glues the narrative together (Murray, 2003).

Through the understanding of narratives and narrative analysis of Riessman (1993; 2008) and thematic narrative analysis by Braun and Clarke (2006), four noteworthy narrative themes emerged: *An unsteady and violent beginning, No place called home: A search for belonging and survival, IPV: The unanticipated cost of love and belonging,* and *Normalisation of IPV experiences: The effects of withdrawal from support.*

An unsteady and violent beginning

The beginning of life for the participants in this study can be described as unsteady, as the women described early experiences of violence including verbal and emotional abuse, beatings, sexual advances, rape and witnessing their mothers being abused by their fathers. Resultant of the abuse they experienced, most were removed from the care of their biological families and either placed into foster or extended family care. The option chosen to protect the then girls, was to "isolate" or remove them from their families. In some cases, the girl child herself left home on her own for her survival and safety. This led them to move homes and having no place to call home, which manifested in feelings and narratives of isolation and neglect. These said experiences and narratives contributed to the theme of an unsteady start in the lives of the participants, which ultimately began with a violent childhood.

Childhood experiences of adversity and abuse have been theorised as risk factors for IPV globally and in South Africa (Taşkale & Soygüt, 2017; Gass et al., 2011). Two of the most common and severe forms of adversity that the women in this study spoke about facing as children were witnessing parental violence and experiencing child abuse. More than half of the participants in this study were abused when they were children. Moreover, more than half of the women described witnessing their mothers being abused by their fathers during their childhood. Experiencing a violent childhood brought out different narratives meanings and outcomes for the participants, including narratives that linked childhood experiences of violence to their own experiences of IPV, experiencing poverty, becoming increasingly responsible and parentified at a young age and not having stable homes. These thematic narratives will be discussed in this theme and the next.

Most of the participants who were abused as children were abused by a family member, or specifically a father figure. This was the case in six of the eight reported narratives of childhood abuse. The linking of adverse childhood experiences to adverse adulthood experiences and especially those related to IPV, was a significant theme in women's narratives in this study. While narrating on their experiences of violence some participants directly understood their experiences of childhood abuse as linked to their later experiences of IPV. Sino, who is a young black woman aged 21, comes from a socioeconomically deprived background and narrates about her experiences of childhood abuse when her father used to beat her:

> Sino: And then, oh, staying with my father…I mean he was already with another woman…they already had kids. And then I was - I think actually that that's where the abuse started. It started with my father.
> Interviewer: Mm.
> Sino: No, I mean the abuse being on me…That's where it started. It was my father abusing me.

Here, while narrating about her father it appears as if the participant had a new-found realisation and understanding of her childhood experiences of abuse. It appears as if her childhood experiences have come into a new meaning for her as she links them to her experiences of abuse later on in her life. She reiterates this a few times, as if these historical narrations about her life bring about a renewed consciousness. For Leah, an older black woman aged 41 and who is also from a socioeconomically disadvantaged background, narrating on her childhood abuse also brought her to make sense of experiences of IPV as linked to her early experiences of abuse:

> I was also abused when I was small. But you know you sometimes wanna close that door… It's like you block it, you don't wanna ever think about that as well…And then uhm, I never knew that I actually needed healing from that childhood even… It's like things is - windows is opening for me now. Where I see why I needed that love from my husband…It actually started from my childhood. The root from my childhood. (Leah)

Like Sino, Leah gives meaning to her childhood experiences of violence as "the root" of her adverse and violent experiences of IPV with her current husband. It appears as if prior to talking about their experiences, "the door had been closed" in being able to make these links; but by being afforded the opportunity to talk about their life history, they have been able to make some sense of the risk that early abuse posed for them in later being exposed to IPV. Boonzaier and van Schalkwyk (2011) have demonstrated that such is a benefit of a narrative approach to understanding IPV amongst marginalised black women in that the women are able to begin orchestrating meaning from their significant life events in a manner that makes sense for them. This is equally a benefit of the life history approach (Germeten, 2013). Some of the women in this study also made meaning of their childhood experiences through narrating on witnessing parental violence.

The participants narrated about their experiences of witnessing their mothers being abused by their fathers. In a South African study that sought to analyse the contextual childhood and adult factors related to IPV across gender, Gass and colleagues (2011) found that the sample of South African women who were experiencing IPV were almost four times as likely to have witnessed parental violence or experienced childhood abuse. It was thus not surprising to hear the participants narrate on their experiences of witnessing parental violence as significant chapters of their life histories and linking their witnessing of parental violence to IPV. The women predominantly conveyed their experiences of domestic violence as a loss of their parents and as a "loss" of their childhood, mainly as a result of parentification.

For Jennifer, a 47-year-old black female, as a result of domestic violence, was taken in by her grandmother, signifying a loss, to some degree, of her biological parents:

> Jennifer: …my father used to beat my mother and stuff. That is why my mom left me. And then she goes to be with my grandparents. And then she went to go out and work… and then I never saw her. I only saw her once when I was 9 years old. It was ah, it was only for that day also and then she disappeared out of my life. Until I had my two kids…I found her and then I bring her to my place…
> Interviewer: Mm, I see. And what was it like meeting your Mom for the first time?

> Jennifer: It was difficult…I had to work through a lot of anger issues. I blamed her, you know, I blamed her for the way I was growing up or what was happening in my life.

Jennifer appears to attach significant meaning to losing her mother and not being able to grow up with her. Her life difficulties are constructed as linked to the loss of her mother's presence in her early years. Shanaaz, a 27-year-old black woman who grew up poor, also attached significant meaning to witnessing parental violence that occurred after her father lost his job:

> Interviewer: And from a young age you had to learn to care for your brother. Uhm, maybe your parents as well, because you were saying your parents were not able to be there for you…
> Shanaaz: …they had their own things going on. They were always drinking and fighting with each other and then I just had to have, get a space for me and my brothers to get out of that environment…Cause it's not good for children to see how their parents is, are fighting…they used to fight a lot and if I come back I have to clean the blood…it was very difficult because my father was a alcoholic…My mother was also an alcoholic…I had to look after my baby brother because he was just born. And whenever I came out of school my mother was…She was so drunk that she passed out and then the baby was crying... I had to come out of school, clean, uhm, wash my brother, clean his nappy…And, for me it was almost like why did I get parents like this? Why are they drinking? Why aren't they caring about us? Because I'm still young. I'm still 9 years old. Why must I do this things where I have parents.

Shanaaz constructs the "loss" of her parents, a destabilised childhood home and an increase in her level of responsibility as linked to alcoholism and violence between her parents. She expresses grief over this as she questions why she had to be responsible for completing household chores, looking after her brother and her parents. She expresses that "her parents had their own things going on" as they drank alcohol and fought – which constructs them as excused from their parenting role and herself as the responsible child, who felt she had to shield her brothers from witnessing her parents fighting as well as cleaning up in the aftermath of a violent episode between her parents. The excessive responsibility and parenting identity that Shanaaz found herself having to take on is what some psychologists would term a 'parentification' (Glickauf-Hughes & Mehlan, 1995; Martinez, 2018). Parentification or the 'parentified child' is the familial form of interaction in which a child is ascribed adult or parental responsibilities, including household responsibilities and caring for siblings and emotionally caring for parents, in the case of parents relinquishing their parental responsibilities, whether consciously or subconsciously (Glickauf-Hughes & Mehlan, 1995; Martinez, 2018).

A similar narrative of loss of a parent ensuing from the context of parental violence was conveyed by Sino. She too found herself in the position of being overburdened with parental responsibilities:

> Sino: …I was also afraid of being lonely and starting a new relationship, because that is very difficult for me…to start a new relationship.
> Interviewer: Do you wanna talk more about that?
> Sino: Ja…like I said earlier, I always, I think it's coming from losing my father.
> Interviewer: Okay. When did that happen?
> Sino: Cause, well, okay, first of all he's not dead. He's still there.
> Interviewer: Oh, okay. Sorry.
> [shared laughter]
> Sino: He still stays in the same house…when I say losing I mean when they separated…she [mother] was also abused actually by my father…That's why she decided to leave. That's why they separated.

It is noteworthy that Sino framed this narrative of moving away from her father as losing him. In speaking about her difficulties in being in relationships, Sino begins to understand her difficulties as related to the loss of her father. His absence thus drew on a direct meaning of loss for her. Barnet and Parker (1995) and Martinez (2018) propose that the emotional absence and unavailability of a parent that may occur on account of domestic violence in the home can be experienced (acutely and chronically) as loss by a child.

Sino also shared a narrative of increased responsibility as a child, as a result of the loss of her father, recalling having to help her mother to sell alcohol:

> Sino: …And then when we got there [Eastern Cape], you know we were struggling…'cause it was just my grandmother, and my uncles…my grandmother was supporting all of us…So it was very difficult…And I remember my mother and them sold alcohol.
> Interviewer: Okay?
> Sino: And then I had to help my mother sell alcohol and then you know, at that young age.
> Interviewer: How old was that?
> Sino: I think I was like 6 or 7…

Divorce or separation of parents can also lead to increased responsibility and parentification of a child who resides with the custodial parent (Barnett & Parker, 1998). To avoid additional emotional loss of the second parent, parentified children are likely to do their best to fill their assigned roles, despite the cost it may have to their own lives (Barnett & Parker, 1998). In her practice as a therapist, Martinez (2018) noticed that in many of the

families where a child had experienced domestic violence, there was a "parent-child role reversal" (p. 102). She found that this can be a source of frustration for the child and can have negative implications for the relational, social and emotional development of the child and can contribute to feelings of neglect. Domestic violence is narrated by the participants in this study as resulting in parentification and a loss of childhood. This is a significant finding and appears to have been the case for Sino, who had to assist with selling alcohol to bring in an income. The loss that Sino speaks about could thus also be interpreted as a loss of a stable socioeconomic standing. This highlights a finding by Boonzaier (2014) which asserts that poor women's experiences of IPV are often compounded by these women's marginalised and oppressed position in society.

Besides confirming the known link in the literature between witnessing domestic violence and experiencing IPV, the narratives that emerged around this experience showed the effects of witnessing parental violence through the theme of loss of childhood, parents and increased child responsibility. Witnessing parental violence and undergoing abuse were significant chapters in the life histories of the women and begin to build the contextual narrative and life story of women who have survived IPV. Although the important association between childhood experiences of violence and experiencing IPV in adulthood has been made in research and by the participants in this study, the cause for such a link is not well established (Fulu et al., 2017). Fulu and colleagues (2017) have commented on the limited understanding in research between connection, pathways, and intersections of different contributing factors for VAW and its effects and that this needs to be improved. For example, the contributing factors to the participants' experiences of parentification, increased responsibility and loss of one's parents after domestic violence could be linked to the intersection of race, class and gender oppression. Jaga et al (2018) argue that black women in South Africa are often the most marginalised and excluded from employment opportunities. This is argued to mainly be a result of a racial and patriarchal South African apartheid society, that placed black women at the bottom of the gendered, racial and social class hierarchy and a society that continues to do so (Booysen & Nkomo, 2010; Jaga et al., 2018). This places black women within a 'triple oppression' of being poor, black and female (Findley & Ogbu, 2011). Experiencing IPV as a poor black woman can be argued to create a "quadruple oppression" for black women, such as the mothers of some of the women in this study. In order to provide for themselves and/or their children in the aftermath of being abused required the mothers of the participants to resort to drastic measures. These measures

included leaving the relationship and the children to find employment elsewhere (like in Jennifer's case) or relocating and having the child assist in bringing in an income (like in Sino's case), both of which required an increased level or responsibility or parentification of the child.

The analysis of these narratives through the lens of parentification that the participants experienced is evidently important. However, it was also analysed within the structural violences that the participants' mothers – who were marginalised through race and class – had to endure, so as to not silence or reduce the experiences of IPV that the mothers endured and that the participants witnessed as children. Parentification must thus be acknowledged as it occurred - within the context and intersection of a 'triple oppression' and VAW, and not simply VAW or IPV alone.

Thus, understanding the association between childhood experiences of violence and IPV in current literature is most likely limited because of the complex intersection of race, sexuality, age, class and gender from the time of childhood abuse or witnessing parental violence until a woman's first experience of IPV (Frederick & Goddard, 2008; Fulu et al., 2017, Jewkes, 2002). The woman (then girl child) becomes implicated within gendered, racial and economic inequality and broad structural systems of power and dominance of men over women, which come to frame her experience (Meer & Müller, 2017). In the childhood of the participants, this was manifested through dominant male or father figure perpetrated violence.

The narratives that followed from experiencing violence during childhood offered a way to break down the complexities and intersectional factors that presented in the life stories of the participants, especially in how experiences of violence in childhood were responded to. The response to child abuse was that of ostracising or sending the girl child to live with someone else, with no repercussions for the male perpetrator, manifesting the social power afforded to men. This response begun a cycle of residential instability in the lives of the participants, which built the theme *No place called home: A search for belonging and survival.*

No place called home: A search for survival and belonging

Most of the participants described a childhood context where they did not have a stable home and caregivers, mostly as a result of domestic violence. The theme above briefly made mention of the residential instability of the participants in the aftermath of experiencing

and witnessing violence. For the participants in this study, experiencing and witnessing violence as children was spoken about as leading to rupture of nuclear families and parental neglect, which led to a change in residence and for some, being placed in a low socioeconomic position. The women spoke about how they felt that they had no place to call home or feeling like they did not belong. This theme merges out of narratives that can be interpreted as a search for a sense of belonging and survival of poverty and structural violence in the face of not having a place to call home. This finding was made quite clear in Samantha's narrative of childhood abuse, residential instability and a subsequent search for belonging. Samantha is a 34-year-old black woman who narrates on how she has struggled with finding a place of belonging from her childhood:

> Interviewer: Do you feel comfortable talking a bit more about what happened with your stepfather?
> Samantha: …it was just like abuse, physical abuse, ja…
> Interviewer: …what was your relationship like with your mother?
> Samantha: …there wasn't a relationship because she would be siding with my father most of the time…I think she also did it because it was a home over her head because she wasn't employed and he would easily tell her to go…I didn't feel like staying there so I would run away most of the time and then come back home…If I'm not by Sasha I'd be running away to my grandmother or to my aunties in…or to my other cousin…
> Interviewer: Okay…you said that you felt you were like an outcast at school and at home, so was there a place where you did feel maybe that you belonged?
> Samantha: Ja, by my friend Sasha's house. Her father went to jail for life… he raped her and her two sisters…Her mother moved out of the house with another man and left them in the house, so we called it the broken palace, so we would stay in that house…I felt like ja, that is my comfort zone, that's my family, she's my family…
> Interviewer: So basically running away was like an escape from him.
> Samantha: Ja, an escape from him.

Samantha speaks about experiencing marked residential instability, where she talks about running away from home repeatedly, in order to escape the adversity and abuse within her family. When she expresses how her mother did not defend her, she makes sense of this as her mother doing it to have a stable home, because she was fully dependent on Samantha's step-father. She constructs her mother's response as reasonable, considering their socioeconomic disempowerment. Being unemployed or having low income for a woman in an abusive context is considered to make women financially dependent on their partners, where the abusive partner uses this as a form of control, making the woman less likely to challenge the partner or leave the relationship, or place of residence (Boonzaier & van Schalkwyk, 2011; Matjasko, Niolon, & Vall, 2013; Pavao et al., 2007). For Samantha, the

cost of residential and socioeconomic instability and a search for belonging can be analysed as outweighing that of remaining in a residence where she was abused and unsupported. She sought support and a sense of belonging in a different home. In an interesting sense, one of the homes was where her friend was also abused by her father, a place her and her friend jointly named "the broken palace"; she finds refuge in others whose lives have been similarly constructed as displaced and 'broken'. Later in her life she speaks about finding a residence and place of belonging but at the cost of abuse and exploitation as a sex worker by her intimate partner.

The context of VAW thus cannot be conceived without acknowledging men's power position in society (CSVR, 2017; Meer & Müller, 2017). The patriarchal domination of men within South African society is an important lens from which to view IPV against women and its effects. This is particularly important because of how patriarchy maintains women's lower socioeconomic class positioning through men's power and control over women and children, especially through men's higher levels of employment and income (Gibbs, et al, 2018; Gibbs, Sikweyiya & Jewkes, 2015). This is clear in the narratives of the participants.

In Yas' life history, she voices how as a young black girl, her residential instability and lacking a sense of belonging compelled her to take drastic measures for survival. Her "search" for survival began when she was abused by her father:

> Interviewer: …before you were 13, uhm, I know you're saying most of that time you spent with your foster mom, who's…you feel is more of your mom. Did you face any abuse during those years? From a young age until you were 13.
> Yas: My father actually sexual abused me.

Yas reports being placed in foster care in order to protect her from abuse from her father but upon her foster mother passing away, she was displaced and restricted in her choices, leading to a desperate decision in order to find a place where she felt a sense of belonging - marriage at a very young age.

> Yas: I was…I was very young when I get married.
> Interviewer: Oh yes, you said you were 14…Can you tell me…about how that happened?
> Yas: 14. I don't have a relationship with my mother, you sign the papers, that's all…He was like, a, escape for me. He loves me. I have a house, I have a place to stay. I was just getting married because I wanted…I don't have a place to stay…And I don't want to live with my mother…And my foster mother also passed. I need someone that can, I can say…someone is looking after me…

Unfortunately, Yas' marriage was an illegally arranged child marriage marked by IPV, and here again, finally finding residential stability came at the cost of abuse and halting her education. As is evident in the life history of Yas', residential instability has been associated with disruptions in schooling, and a restriction of one's life choices (Cotton & Schwartz-Barcott, 2015; Frederick & Goddard, 2008). Furthermore, it comes with a repetition of the factors that led up to it. Thus, at an early age, a cycle of residential stability ensues in the lives of the participants, where after relocating, participants experienced (more) abuse, isolation and neglect, which forced them to relocate again in a fight for survival. In the words of Samantha, they were *"in and out, up and down, up and down"*:

> I stayed there by my aunty…for I think 3 or 4 months and then I went back home, they put me back into school… I ran away again, so my life just in and out, up and down, up and down. (Samantha)

The participants' childhood narrative around abuse could be viewed as "in and out" from one abusive situation to another and "up and down, up and down" from one home to another, while simultaneously experiencing other constraints, such as disruptions in their schooling and poverty.

Lira's schooling was disrupted in a search for survival. Lira is a black woman originally from a low socioeconomic background in the Eastern Cape. She grew up in boarding school for most of her childhood after her parents divorced and she relocated with her mother and stepfather. She reports preferring to live at boarding school, because when she was home she experienced abuse and sexual advances from her stepfather, as will be evidenced later. However, she relays having to leave school before the time to find a way to survive:

> …So, I stay in boarding from Grade 1 up until Grade 11 then, Grade 11 it was too much for me. I couldn't take it anymore then I come to Cape Town…I didn't start Grade 12. So, when I had to start Grade 12 I apply for bursary and stuff. I didn't get a bursary in high school. So now my parents didn't have enough money to give me…So, I dropped the school I come to Cape Town and I was having hopes that if I come to Cape Town then I am gonna have a job and I am gonna study again, continue with my studies on my own… (Lira)

In studying community level factors related to mistreatment of children in the United States, Coulton, Korbin, Su and Chow (1995) found a significant relationship between an

unstable childhood home and poverty. Unstable housing is cited as one of the most significant socioeconomic consequences of IPV and domestic abuse for women and children who escape such circumstances (Baker, Billhardt, Warren, Rollins , Glass, 2010; Pavao, Alvarez, Baumrind, Induni & Kimerling, 2007). It is thus important to analyse the residential instability of the participants within the broader socioeconomic context that they occurred.

Crenshaw (1991) highlights that unstable housing can be understood as a manifestation of race, class and gender oppression where poor black women face the most difficulty in acquiring employment, housing, and support from their communities. The communities cited as also highly likely to be unemployed and lacking stable housing (Crenshaw, 1991). The narrative of the abused girl child and her mother having to face a change in lifestyle and location, while the perpetrator remained unsanctioned is a commonality for contexts where violence is normalised, such as in South Africa (Jewkes, 2002). In this study it emerges that the mothers of the participants (who were survivors of their own IPV) and the participants as young girls (who were survivors of childhood abuse) were "sanctioned" or forced to sanction themselves by relocating in order to survive and to escape the violence. This marginalisation caused a rupture of their nuclear families and a change in socioeconomic status. The people whom they relocated to were other black women who had often been abused, did not have stable housing, employment or income. This speaks to the broader context and system of gendered inequality in which the unstable housing takes place. The gendered, and particularly the patriarchal, raced and classed functioning of South African society can be seen as an overall driver of the unstable housing difficulties, as is understood through intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991).

The relocations of the participants disrupted relationships and socioeconomic stability, marking the beginnings of the intersection of gendered and socioeconomic inequalities working their way into the women's lives. Not having a stable place to call home impacted how the women navigated their childhood in search of survival from poverty and belonging. In a number of the participant's narratives, finding stability did not equate to finding a sense of belonging, which the women also narrate that they were searching for. Lira's narrative is one that begins to show that the women's search for survival was simultaneously a search for a sense of belonging. Her narrative was centred on of finding stability and a place where she feels like she belonged, in the face of intersecting oppressional challenges:

> Lira: My childhood I was, I had a lot of freedom because there was no mom or dad that was gonna shout with me, hit me and all of that. Because in boarding school…you can do anything that you wanna do... My childhood I enjoyed myself because that time boarding school it was the biggest thing…Home is not home for me. It's a place like, I don't call it home…For me it was just a stress man. I know that if I am going home, it is just a stress. It is better for me to be there at school.
> Interviewer: So school was more of the home for you?
> Lira: Mm.

In the dissection of where and what home meant for Lira, it emerges that her boarding school felt more like home for her. It was a place of freedom and in her later years, a safe space away from an abusive home environment. However, as Lira continued to narrate on her experiences of boarding school, her initial construction of it as a positive and enjoyable environment begins to shift and be contradicted:

> Interviewer: …what was it like living there?
> Lira: For me it was not nice…the sad part was some children their parents they come visit them with presents and stuff and mine, they never come for my birthday…Most of the weekends, my friends come they are always busy to bring the stuff and food and all of that. But mine, they never come.
> Interviewer: Mm. And how did that make you feel at the time?
> Lira: It make me feel like I am not someone. It make me feel less, it makes me feel like I am not enough. Or I am not like other children at home, my sisters and brothers, like when I am at school…So all that like it makes me feel like an outsider. So, since I was young I just feel like an outsider or like I am nobody, like nobody really values me.

Lira constructs her boarding school as a place of freedom *and* simultaneously as a place where she felt isolated from her family. This narrative of having relocated and initially finding solace away from an abusive or turbulent home environment to then feeling lonely, isolated (*like an outsider*) and devalued (*like I am nobody*) was projected in the women's narratives. The potential meaning of Samantha's earlier reported and contradictory construction of her friend's home as a *"broken palace"* could take on important symbolism and meaning for the recurring theme of feeling isolated and neglected in a residence away from the women's families. In the way that they constructed these homes away from home, their "broken palaces" seem to symbolise a residence that is stable and well built like a palace, but later takes on a brokenness because of the effects of being broken away from one's parents, siblings and family. Initially the homes that they moved or escaped to looked like a palace - a "comfort zone" a place of freedom, a place with strong walls of refuge, but because of the painful internal feelings of loss of belonging, it takes on a brokenness that represents the damage within their

life histories. Through her narrative, Michelle gave eloquent meaning and voice to the resulting brokenness that the participants felt:

> …And that made me feel unloved. That made me feel unwanted, it made me feel rejected…Yuh[4], It broke me. It is a negative because it is like my puzzle, my, my chain is broken - no links. It is my mother, it is my siblings, *my family*, my immediate family. (Michelle)

Like the other participants Michelle conveys her sense of brokenness, disconnection, devaluation by not living with a mother who cares for her and not having a strong connection with her family. She likens her feelings of rejection and isolation as a broken chain with no links to her family. To summarise this construction of her brokenness and that of the other women in some of the metaphors that the participants used, broken and abusive homes led them to broken palaces of refuge, which broke the links between them and their families, leading to feelings of a void in their lives, for years to come. Jennifer articulates the long-term effects of feeling isolated and disconnected from her family:

> Jennifer: …we had like family, but I was not really part of them…I was like always the outsider so that is why I was always alone by myself…I was between families…I didn't know my Mom, where my Mom was. I didn't know my father…and I think, what made me also stay for so long in that kinds of relationship because why, I never knew anything else. And, like I said today, I think the biggest shape shifter in my life was not having my parents with me.

The effects of childhood abuse, absent parents or parental love and the resultant unstable home and no sense of belonging thus seems to persist for years beyond the initial experience, as does the social isolation that results from it (Sheikh, 2018). One of these effects was inferred through narratives of leaving school in order to "look for love":

> I decided to leave school when I was in standard 8…I decided to leave school because of lacking of…you know, I never had that parenting love, that hug and that talks and playfulness…I never had that and I had to go look for it outside…so I left school and also because of what I said, what happened at home, like I was just a…I don't know, I was totally a wreck… (Samantha)

[4] 'Yuh' is similar to the South African slang word 'yoh', used as an exclamation to express awe, shock or surprise. Similar to the English expression 'wow'.

Samantha describes leaving school to look for love and a sense of belonging "outside" of the home. Michelle also speaks about love being "outside":

> Michelle: …when I was 16… I went out by the door, going to look for love outside. And I got involved with a older man…At the time I didn't know how old he was. But as I got older, I found out he was 38 at that time…I found out he is married. But didn't have kids, and he gave me anything I wanted. He was like a father to me, he was like… he was like someone I always wanted. The dad figure also. If I tell him I need this, if I tell him I want that, he would, he would-
> Interviewer: He would give it to you.
> Michelle: Yes…

In this extract. Michelle narrates leaving school temporarily to fill a void of love and to find a sense of belonging, and reports finding what she was searching for in a relationship with an older man. Lira's narrative of her search for belonging and survival from poverty can simultaneously be considered as a narrative of a search for love. The following excerpt continues from Lira's narrative shared earlier in the current theme:

> So, I dropped the school I come to Cape Town and I was having hopes that if I come to Cape Town then I am gonna have a job and I am gonna study again, continue with my studies on my own…So I meet [my baby's] father...when I move in with him, I stay with him and he play all the roles that my parents supposed to play. He gave me love, care, attention, money, all of that. (Lira)

Where Lira had initially been forced to leave school to survive poverty as presented earlier, when she finds someone who began to care for her she appears glad and comforted that while searching for a job to support herself, she has found someone who can take care of her material and emotional need of wanting to belong. Her narrative of surviving poverty quickly changes to one of finding love.

The idea that the women supposed that they could find belonging through romantic relationships and through love may be linked to constructions of romantic relationships (Power, Koch, Kralik & Jackson, 2006). In previous findings, women have narrated about love and romantic relationships with men as capable of aiding women in overcoming a multitude of difficulties and in providing women with rewards and fulfilment (Power et al., 2006; Singh & Myende, 2017). For many of the participants, intentionally pursuing love and romantic relationships coincided with their leaving school and for some, they cited that they left school in order to fill the different voids that they had through romantic relationships with men. Lira describes the financial constraints being the reason why she left school. However,

she conveys the sense that even though she lost out on completing high school, she gained a parental figure who took care of not only her financial concerns, but also gave her love, care and attention, which she, and most of the women in this study felt that they lacked in their childhood. Thereafter she did not complete her schooling.

It should not be interpreted that it was by chance that Lira found a sense of belonging and stability in a romantic relationship with a man. Men in society and in South African society are often socio-culturally constructed as the 'breadwinners' or 'providers' (CSVR, 2017; Boonzaier & de la Rey, 2004). These constructions are a patriarchal reality because of the gender inequality between men and women that affords men the economic and financial opportunities to be the 'provider'. This reality, coupled with what romantic relationships are socially portrayed to offer young women, particularly vulnerable women, can be said to have contributed strongly to their looking for love in romantic relationships and within contexts of low socioeconomic positioning, for most which was at the cost of not completing their schooling.

It appears that around in their teens, and as the participants slowly approached adulthood, the reality of the impact that the intersection of the gendered violence became more solidified. The poverty in which they found themselves led them to sacrifice their education in order to find quicker ways to "survive" their contextual challenges and their newfound realisation of their marginalised and oppressed position in society. Surviving poverty and structural violences as black women, were enacted on the women in the form of leaving school to work or leaving school or one's family home in order to find a place of economic stability and belonging. Finding stability and belonging was most commonly with a man, as the women narrated. A "simultaneous entanglement of inequalities" (Roth, 2013, p.2 as cited in Gouws, 2017) began to come to the conscious awareness of the participants, where they begin to realise the marginalised and oppressed position of women in patriarchal society. In attempts to remedy this position, they were so oppressed by their contextual circumstances to the point that they had to abandon their education where their education could have been a source of socioeconomic empowerment (Jewkes, 2002).

One begins to envision the complexity and nature of the "interlocking systems of oppression" (Collins, 1993) and how they can diminish women's '*life chances'* at socioeconomic empowerment and success (Meer & Müller, 2017). It is a point where structural violence keep poor black women in cycles of intersecting oppressions. In the lives

of the black women in this study, their search for stability and belonging kept them in the cycle of intersecting oppressions as they found themselves exposed to GBV in the form of IPV. Surviving poverty, their childhood abusers, finding a place to call home, love and a sense of belonging was somewhat short-lived, as where the women's first experiences of IPV began within their newfound homes.

IPV: The unanticipated cost of love and belonging

The women in the study drew on a particular way of talking about how they ended up in abusive relationships, which drew upon popular narratives about looking for love and attention in the 'wrong places'. In analysing the data, it became difficult to ignore that in all of the relationships where they talk about finding love, the participants were abused. This theme emerged out of the narratives of finding belonging and love in the 'wrong places' and at a cost in the form of IPV. Crystal, Jennifer and Sino share a similar style of narration regarding how they made sense of finding themselves in abusive relationships:

> Crystal: It's me that has never really been fully loved by the people that brought me into this world. So how can you, have, its gonna happen somewhere that you are gonna end up being in a relationship where you are filling a void...So, it's a void that I needed to fill…if you're understanding what I am trying to say is that, I always went for men that had the tendency of abusiveness or would fill up the void inside me that I thought I needed a man."

Crystal narrates about a void of love from her parents that she thought would be filled through romantic relationship. She self-blames as she narrates that the void led her to abusive men when she says, "I went for men that had the tendency for abusiveness…".

> Jennifer: …I think the biggest shape shifter in my life was not having my parents with me… And I think, what made me also stay for so long in that kinds of relationship because why? I never knew anything else.

For Jennifer, her parents were not physically with her throughout most of her life, but she counts their absence as, in her own words, "*the biggest shape shifter*" in her life. She narrates that this could have influenced her difficulty in escaping an abusive marriage. This was also something Lira reported, with regards to her three-year relationship:

> Lira: Like when he forced me, like he begged me…to have a baby...That make me go back…with all the lies because I didn't want to lose him. I didn't see myself with someone else, without him. Because I feel like if I lose him man, who is going to give

me this love that my parents failed to give me. This kind of care and all of that. I feel like there is no one in this world that can play that role that he is playing to me.

Lira speaks to a heteronormative discourse that positions women as 'lacking' if they do not have men in their lives whether it be a father figure or a romantic male partner (Power et al., 2006). The importance of a male figure in the participants lives was narrated through the "role" they expect men to play, in providing love and care. Leah constructs it as somewhat of a deep longing for love that as she narrates on re-marrying her abusive ex-husband:

> Leah: …he's always been abusive and uh, very violent. Embarrass me in front of people…he beats me up in public...But because I wanted that love I always thought maybe he will change…and then we got married and we stayed on our own. But my aunt in Manenberg said "no, don't", but still I wanted to give myself a chance to be on my own…Then I can truly say I've been married and I've stayed on my own.
> Interviewer: Was that important to you?
> Leah: Yes. I wanted my own family…because I never had truly that love. So, I really wanted it because my mother and father never uhm married to one another…So I truly- I was seeking.
> Leah: And then uhm, cause I'm also very old school person you know, and then I thought uhm…old school person, where uhm, I didn't wanna get married to somebody else also…It says until death…
> Interviewer: …do us part.
> Leah: … do us part, yes. So, we got married again but then things got more worse.

Heterosexist norms in society are argued to endorse a standard of love that influences a woman's commitment to remain in a relationship, albeit an abusive one (Dare, Guadagno & Muscanell, 2013; Jewkes, 2002; Singh & Myende, 2017). Furthermore, being outside of the relationship is often experienced as more painful and costly than being in the abusive relationship, which Leah expresses in her deep desire to have a family with her husband (Singh & Myende, 2017). Her commitment to her abusive husband was thus costly, but not as costly as not having a home and family of their own; not as costly as leaving the void unfilled.

It becomes clear that the cost that participants had to pay to find love was a great one as the cost came in the form of abuse from their partners. It is difficult to ascertain whether the participants considered it a cost in the initial stages of their relationships. Dare and colleagues (2013) argue that a woman's initial commitment to an intimate relationship can lead to discounting of early signs of abuse, making it difficult to leave later in the relationship, wherein women begin to self-blame. This was reflected by Ammara's account of

her commitment to her relationship and Michelle's response to a comment on the abuse she experienced as a teenager during her relationship with an older married man:

> I just kept it in for, for, for so long, like. I didn't give up when it started, I still wanted to continue with the relationship because, I loved him and…I really didn't know it was abuse at that time. (Ammara)

> Interviewer: Okay. Um- I think the most interesting thing about that story was that, it sounded like quite a hectic story but you were smiling the whole way through.
> Michelle: [Laughs] I was a naughty girl…Just for love and that attention you see.

The collective narrative that the women constructed was that regardless of the abuse, the relationships they had with the abusive partners filled different voids that their parents had left. However, this narrative leads to one of self-blame. Michelle's construction of herself as a "naughty girl", Crystal's earlier words, "I went for men that had the tendency for abusiveness". The women trying to find to find reasons why they stayed with partners who abused them, can be interpreted as self-blame. This occurs when women place blame for experiencing IPV on themselves rather than the abusive situation in which they find themselves in (Dare et al., 2013; Eckstein, 2011). Self-blame also serves as factor that forces women who experience IPV to "cope" with the abusive partner (Dare et al., 2013). In addition, women who experience abuse have been found to rather focus on the few positive features of their relationships, such as receiving love from their partners, rather than on the abuse, which they could not have anticipated (Eckstein, 2011; Hebert, Silver & Ellard, 1991). To add another layer to the complexity of ending up in an abusive relationship, Ammara narrates her life history and social context as a black woman who faced poverty from a young age and not being able to complete school as shaping her vulnerability to abuse:

> Interviewer: Sounds like you went through quite a lot growing up.
> Ammara: Ja, I had to face a lot of…obstacles. And I don't want my babies to go through that…I don't want them to face the things that I face. Because I know it will always be with them, because it's still with me. I never outgrow them. It still haunting me…It's because of situation I ended up pregnant. First of all, I ended up in an abusive relationship because of situation.

Rather than spontaneously becoming exposed to abuse, it seems that the participants became exposed to abuse because of and within contextual and relational issues, including the social and intersectional struggles of their parents. A review of the life context reveals

that the "situation" as Ammara called it, the context of the lives of the participants haunted them and was a contributing factor in them being in abusive relationships.

Thus far, the contextual issues most common and significant to the majority of the participants were being from a lower socioeconomic class, experiences of violence during childhood, living with a single parent or with relatives or in foster care, and not having a stable home, which ultimately led to strained or conflictual relationship with one or both parents. The parents of the participants themselves seem to have had similar childhood experiences, with socioeconomic difficulties, not having stable homes, not having lived with their parents and having strained or conflictual relationships with their own parents. The reality is that in their parenting, the parents of the participants also felt incapacitated by contextual and their own relational factors to provide stable income, stable homes and stable, secure parenting, love and attention for their children. The intimate partners of the participants came to serve as the stable attachment and love figures that they had not had before. This is why African feminist scholars such as Herlihy (2013) and Haysom (2013) argue for the inclusion of discourses of love and emotions in African gendered scholarship, because of the context in which love occurs and intersects with IPV, particularly in relation to women's socioeconomic status and how love is a subconscious and covert vehicle to pursuing relationships with men.

Bhana (2013, p. 6) states that "Money and love are not separate issues but rather entangled in feelings, desires and ideals of love." Pursuit of love and romantic relationships can also implicitly be driven by women's low socioeconomic status, unstable living arrangements and isolation from families in the case of the participants in this study (Haysom, 2013). Power et al., (2006) argue that the focus on sense of warmth, stability and safety that romantic love and relationships can bring, and that the participants so desired, can easily disguise behaviours that are often indicators for IPV, and drive self-blame for staying in an abusive relationship. Thus, the issue of filling a void becomes about more than just a void of love and relationship, but rather it also becomes about a void of stability, wherein the intimate relationship, although unanticipatedly abusive, is narrated as allowing for some form of residential and socioeconomic stability. This was something which the participants said that they valued and which this theme and the narratives within have attempted to demonstrate.

Being in abusive relationships further marginalised the women from support networks and the families that they had been isolated from since childhood, which is common in IPV (Shiu-Thornton et al., 2005). Furthermore, the women shared narratives of normalisation, which had different implications for their understanding of the IPV, its severity as well as for how long they experienced IPV. These narratives emerged into the next theme of *Minimisation and Money: The apparent normalisation of IPV experiences.*

Normalisation of IPV experiences: The effects of withdrawal from support

Research has shown that the minimisation and normalisation of IPV is a vehicle for non-disclosure of a woman's experiences of IPV which ultimately minimises women's chances of receiving social support, formal support, and financial support (Jewkes, 2002; Levendosky et al., 2004; Sylaska & Edwards 2014). Having social support signifies a connectedness to people who care about someone and people who are able to assist that person during challenging times and experiences (Machisa, Christofides & Jewkes, 2018). In the context of IPV, social support is known to be a protective factor associated with reduced IPV and a minimisation of its effects (Jewkes, 2002; Machisa et al., 2018; Shiu-Thornton et al., 2005). However, abused women often have lower levels and sources of support than women who are not abused (Beeble, Bybeee, Sullian & Adams; Sylaska & Edwards, 2014). To this end, when the researchers inquired about support systems of the participants, their responses were strikingly similar. The women did not have strong support systems or a complete absence of support:

> I spoke to my Mom…she would like, sometimes…speak to her friends about it. And that is what I hate, that is why I trust no one…you need family to support you but they turn their backs on you because you don't work. And they are there to judge you. And sometimes they don't support you the way you need to be supported. At a time like this I am vulnerable. (Michelle)

> …He was not really there but he let us suffer, go hungry, look for food, go to people, ask for stuff, for certain things and stuff like that. And his family wasn't really supportive of us. You know, I would go to his sister and I would ask for money for bread, or money for electricity. …and then would tell you, you are a loafer…she would tell my kids, "Ja, you are always hungry, you mustn't come to my place and look for food…". And then she tells me, "Ja, you have so many kids, why did you get so many kids?". And I am like, come now, this is another form of abuse, because why, this is not really helping, because why…we then I started to cut myself off but what he did started doing was cutting me off from my friends, and then even from my family. He wouldn't let me go see my family. (Jennifer)

A narrative of being judged and belittled is what shaped the women's experiences of a lack of social support. It is not uncommon for women who experience IPV to feel as if they cannot not trust people within their social networks or people that could be potential sources of social support. Furthermore, in a South African study by Machisa et al (2018) conducted in the province of Gauteng, it was found that women who have been abused receive negative responses from people within their social networks, which serves as deterrents to seeking support. This finding is similar to that found in an American literature review on the social support networks of survivors of IPV (Sylaska & Edwards, 2013). Within their relationships, most of the women in the study were isolated from their families, friends and communities by their partners, further isolating them from society and sources of support, a common finding of women who experience IPV (Sylaska & Edwards, 2013; Jewkes, 2002).

The withdrawal from support narrated by the women seemed to be a continuation of the isolation and lack of support they experienced in childhood when they were abused or witnessed abuse. Their withdrawal can be regarded as more of a response to a context and community of minimal or no support of women who experience IPV (Jewkes, 2002; Machisa et al., 2018). Withdrawn from family and social support, the women eventually sought formal support at a women's shelter for abused women and children. This being their first or only option for support can be understood as problematic because while there is little to no research on the aftermath of survivors of IPV in South Africa leaving a shelter, it is postulated that women often return to their abusive partners or become homeless, because they do not have anywhere else to go; they do not have anyone else who will support them (van Schalkwyk, Boonzaier and Gobodo-Madikizela, 2014). This once again, leaves survivors of IPV withdrawn from support. This was articulated by Jennifer, a black woman who has been married for 22 years, has 5 children, and has reported having little to no income to support her family:

> …I say to the social workers, you give me four months to live here. Four months is not enough for me. But if I can find a job in four months and it is enough to sustain myself and my children, and have a place of my own, then I would really do it…Then I can say I am stronger…If you are not ready and equipped and skilled, and then you have to get back there? I promise you, you are gonna get back into the same trap. (Jennifer)

What Jennifer has given voice to in this excerpt is that although the shelter has its benefits, if she is not able to obtain a job and somewhere else to live, her stay at the shelter is somewhat futile. She highlights that the only option women often have after leaving the shelter

is to return to the abuser if they do not have a job and other sources of social support. There is a common finding in IPV narratives that there are no other options available for black women who have experienced IPV (Crenshaw, 1991; Meer & Müller, 2017). All of these factors and negative societal responses to women's experiences of IPV are argued to justify and maintain men's dominance over women (Machisa et al., 2018). Compounded by the normalisation of IPV within the women's contexts as well as earlier contextual life factors that had already marginalised the majority of the participants, the lack of social support and the potential to reach out for support was stark.

In struggling to find support in the face of experiencing abuse, the women seem to minimise and normalise their experiences. Although research has shown that normalisation of IPV against women decreases a woman's chances of receiving social support, the converse can also be argued to be true. The participants demonstrated this link through narratives that linked not having financial or social support leading them to minimise their experiences of violence because they had nowhere to go.

Yas and Ammara who are both black women in their 20s, spoke about the difficulties of being unemployed and having to rely on their abusive intimate partners. They construct a narrative of normalisation and minimisation through the lens of what their relationships afforded them:

> Yas: That's what…that's all. The hitting is not so bad because the hitting I can hide and I can lie about it but emotionally it was getting me down because the words was very sore.
> Interviewer: Mm. And was this happening every day?
> Yas: Every day. I was used to it.
> Interviewer: That's a lot to deal with hey.
> Yas: [laughs]. Ja…you get used to it. For you it's life…Permanent life. But it's not easy just to pack your bags and leave because you build your…you living together. It's not all the day- times. Maybe yes, we do fight, we do argue, but not all- maybe once a- Maybe during the week there's one week- one day in a week we don't fight, we just- he's a different person.
> Interviewer: Mm.
> Yas: And then you build together.

Yas constructs one of the difficulties of leaving her partner as a result of them having built together. One can assume that what Yas and her partner had built refers to the building of the home and a particular lifestyle. This speaks to some of the complexity of the context in which abuse occurs – in the context of minimal external support, low socioeconomic status,

at least having somewhere to stay is one major way in which IPV can easily become minimised. Ammara powerfully narrated this:

> I wanna be independent, I don't wanna depend on anyone again because I did learn from that. When you are independent, and you depend on someone, that person will put you in his pocket, fumble you like a piece of paper and put you in there. You cannot say or do anything because he is providing with food, he is providing with a roof over your head, he is buying clothes. (Ammara)

In this excerpt Ammara seems to give voice to the constraints and seemingly inescapable heteronormative patriarchy and reality of the impoverished conditions of black women, who possibly represent the poorest group of individuals in South African society (Boonzaier & van Schalkwyk, 2011; Singh & Myende, 2017). Her narrative demonstrates that low socioeconomic status and structural gender inequalities perpetuates abuse and poses challenge to leaving an abusive relationship, because the abuser is his partner disempowered and incapacitated to move without him, because he provides the most basic of human needs for the woman, a way of surviving as a human.

The narrative of apparent minimisation and normalisation could thus signify a way of survival for participants in the face of inescapable structural gendered inequalities (Boonzaier & de la Rey, 2004; Singh & Myende, 2017). Unfortunately, their survival in this manner is difficult for people around them to see, because as some participants narrated, they hid the signs of physical abuse but more so because the participants did not have people to show and share their experiences with. Thus, like the analogy provided by Ammara, these women seem to be "fumbled" up (marginalised and incapacitated) and hidden (isolated) in the pockets of abusive intimate partners. This analogy speaks to a bigger theme of isolation, marginalisation and a lack of social support that abused women in this study experienced as well as how they eventually found themselves in a shelter for abused women and withdrawn from support. Furthermore, and adding to how these women become marginalised and withdrawn from support, important links were drawn between the women's minimisation of IPV and society's normalisation of VAW:

> Sino: So I've shared it with a lot of people, people that I don't even know…
> Interviewer: And how do these people respond?
> Sino: They respond like it's normal. It has happened to them or someone they know…
> Interviewer: And how did you feel about that?

> Sino: I felt like I didn't wanna be like those people. I felt like I don't want it to be normal to me…I don't know about other countries, but…and I don't know about other races but it's like we as like black people, black women it's like it's normal to be abused by men…It's normal. So why should *you* leave…I don't know why I stayed in abusive relationship for that long. Perhaps- I don't wanna blame people, but perhaps it's because whenever you talk to a person about the fact that you are being abused, you know, it's like it's normal…He's abusing you because he loves you.

Sino narrates on the apparent pervasiveness of IPV against black women, who are often confronted with the idea that it is normal to be abused by a male partner. She constructs her incapacitation to leave her abusers as linked to the normalisation of IPV against women within her community. What emerges and can be interpreted from her narrative is the socially constructed normalisation of VAW and the said 'culture of violence' present in the South African society, and the subordination of women as vehicle for keeping women in abusive relationships (Singh & Myende, 2017; Lamb & Snodgrass, 2013).

In an analysis of the patterns of violence within South African society, Collins (2013) argues that South African society is reliant on using violence and it is normalised as an effective way of regulating conflict and relationships, particularly in intimate relationships. In their research on how female university students develop resilience to IPV, Singh and Myende (2017) analyse how it has specifically become normative for men to use violence within intimate relationships. They argue that a patriarchal South African context has constructed toxic and violent masculinities as a normative ascription of the male gender identity. Socially and generationally transmitted heterosexist norms are often complicit in normalising relationships that centre on male dominance and control (Singh & Myende, 2017). When women do not adhere to prescribed gendered roles within intimate relationships that draw from societal heterosexist norms, Jewkes (2002) and Abrahams et al., (2006) argue that IPV becomes a tool to regulate this non-adherence. van Niekerk (2015) argues that this speaks to more than just to the normalisation of violence and a culture of violence, but also to the problematic normalisation of subordinating and chastising women. The low social position of poor black women who have been abused in South Africa can also be viewed as continuously marginalising, subjugating women and subjecting them to IPV:

> So how do we as women equipped ourselves against men like that? Because why? We are going again and again and again. Because why? Where we go, we didn't get enough training. We didn't get enough equipment to start maybe your own business. Government can't help you because you don't have money, or the right background... There is so much wrong with the system…that there is no escape with the women that

> is in the abusive relationship…Because this house, that he said is the house that he built for me, but I am not like feeling the woman of the house because of the way he treated me. It is not a house! You, you feel totally dead. You feel despondent. But you sit there because why, you are comfortable in that. And that is where the danger is. We become so comfortable in being abused. And because why, we, we have this thing, "Oh but he is my man", nooo! God had not made us this way…I told him one day, "I hate money"…Money is keeping me captive. I can't break away from you because of my children. I need you in my life to support my kids. And that is the one thing that I hate about it. I really, really hate money. We can't live in these days and this life without money. I hate money with a passion. Because that is another way of keeping us captive, in our situations. (Jennifer)

Jennifer's expressive hate of money is it what she understands as keeping her entrapped within an abusive relationship. This contrasts to her construction of women being complicit in "sit[ting] there" in abuse and becoming normalised and "comfortable" within it, which has implications for self-blaming of survivors of IPV. Despite this, she contextualises the intersectional factors at play within IPV and escaping IPV. What may seem like normalisation is more a strong socioeconomic disempowerment and incapacitation of women who are abused. Thus, in this final extract Jennifer, who experienced a long 22 years of IPV, articulates the complexity of contextual issues that make it difficult for women to firstly understand or acknowledge that IPV is *not* normal and secondly, how societal and contextual constraints keep these women from empowering and equipping themselves to leave abusive males partners. Thirdly, the issue of stability and relationship, which hold so much weight for the women in this study, cannot be underestimated and ignored in understanding the complexities of IPV. This complexity can become complicated to unpack, which seems to have been the case for Jennifer. Her understanding of why women stay in abusive relationships somewhat contradict each other in that she first demonstrates that "*the system*" is what keeps women from equipping themselves from leaving abuse and then she constructs women who experience IPV as being "*comfortable in being abused*". She demonstrates the intersectional context of IPV – a lack of external support, education, money, employment, and being a woman in a patriarchal society, are the structural inequalities that keep women entrapped within abusive relationships (van Niekerk & Boonzaier, 2015). She simultaneously constructs women as complicit and culpable in the normalisation and perpetuation of IPV because they "sit there". This construction of herself as a complicit and "willing participant" is a form of victim-blaming and is common in women's narratives of IPV (Boonzaier & van Schalkwyk, 2011; Power et al., 2006). Her narrative denotes less or no responsibility to the male perpetrator and it is common in contexts where violence is normalised, such as in South

Africa (Boonzaier & van Schalkwyk, 2011; Jewkes, 2002). The reality is then that the system or society is what makes drives this "complacency' and normalisation of the experience and literally forces women to "sit there". This is further reiterated by Jennifer who cites having had a house built or provided for a woman by her partner as a factor that makes it difficult to escape IPV.

In the South African context where material poverty, unemployment and the low socioeconomic status of women is pervasive, the loss of tangible assets afforded by being in a partnership cannot be side-lined when trying to understand why women may come to minimise their own experiences of IPV (Singh & Myende, 2017). Thus, the intersection and interplay between the women's experiences of IPV and their socioeconomic context status serves as a vehicle for their normalisation of IPV and contributes towards the various challenges in leaving the relationship (Boonzaier, 2014). For most of the women in this study, marginalisation because of a lack of education or employment was a running theme that implicated their normalisation of IPV against women. As the literature suggests, and as this theme has attempted to demonstrate, this normalisation leads to reduced chances of an abused woman seeking and finding formal and social support.

Where this study met the participants is where their isolation and withdrawal from social support was fully manifested. However, as has been narrated and discussed, in the case that they do find support, it is often temporary support that often leaves them with no other choices and avenues of support but to return to the abusive partner and continued experiences of IPV. Thus, the participants' experiences of IPV manifested at the intersection of broader structural challenges where they had no place to really call home, were isolated from their families and in search of belonging, where they were socioeconomically marginalised and attempting to survive poverty, and where they became withdrawn from support, all omnipresent narratives in their lives. This context makes it almost impossible for women to escape IPV against women (Boonzaier, 2014), unless the structural patriarchal, raced and gendered constraints that keep black South African women subordinated and marginalised begin to be unravelled.

Aristotle is said to have understood narratives as *"…moral tales, depicting a rupture from the expected – interpretive because they mirror the world, rather than copying it exactly"* (Riessman, 2008, p. 4). In sum, IPV against the women in this study can be viewed as a rupture from the expected in the sense that it is not what one would expect or desire to happen in their life. Through using the life history approach, multiple narratives emerged

about the context of the participants' lives prior to their first experience of IPV. The lives of the participants showed constant ruptures from the expected, with these ruptures being difficult and unfavourable experiences. These unfavourable experiences appeared to emerge through the continual intersection and interplay of different contextual factors such as, coming from a low socioeconomic background, experiencing childhood abuse and domestic violence, having unstable housing or no home at all and being a poor black woman within a patriarchal society. The intersection of these inequalities produced inescapable social isolation, marginalisation and being in relationships characterised by IPV, of which the reality and consequences are often dire. Of these consequences, the direst seems to have been the eventual normalisation and minimisation of IPV by the women themselves and a shortage of formal and informal social and economic support for them to escape IPV and its effects. This lack of support was complicit in the participants ending up in a women's shelter where this research project found them.

A summary of the research findings, the study limitations, and recommendations for future IPV and life history research will form the next and concluding chapter.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

This chapter provides a summary of the research findings, the limitations of the study, recommendations and directions for future research based on the findings and limitations and a final conclusion.

Summary of findings

This study was conducted through an intersectional life history approach. Few studies have used a life history approach to study IPV, with only one known South African study by the CSVR (2017) having used the life history approach to understand VAW. The CSVR (2017) study used an intersectional approach to understand VAW, but not IPV specifically. Thus, this study offers a unique methodological contribution to understanding IPV in South Africa through applying an intersectional framework and analysis to understanding the life histories and experiences of survivors of IPV in South Africa.

The findings of this life history study were discussed through four main thematic narratives. The themes were structured chronologically, describing the women's difficult and turbulent childhoods, the progression of their lives into adolescence and adulthood and finally to their experiences of IPV and ending up in a women's shelter. Being able to track and document the lives of survivors of IPV from their early years up until the present is a strength of the life history approach (Goodson & Sikes, 2001). The life history approach was thus able to provide a space for women to narrate a holistic and comprehensive account of their lives, their experiences of IPV and the aftermath of IPV within the South African context, as has been found in past life history studies (Sosulki et al., 2010).

The narrations and analysis of the childhoods of the participant's lives revealed some early identifiable risk factors for IPV from a survivor's perspective. These included being abused and facing adversity, such as witnessing domestic violence, parental divorce and experiencing poverty. Such reported adverse experiences are significant in that they have been theorised to be risk factors for IPV (Taşkale & Soygüt, 2017; Gass et al., 2011). The childhood of the participants saw an early introduction to experiencing raced and gendered socioeconomic oppression and GBV, which their mothers also experienced. This brought to reality the 'triple oppression' that this study shows that not only poor black women are subject to, but also poor black girl children (Findley & Ogbu, 2011). This is a significant finding in that one begins to see that young black girls are at early risk of gendered violence

and oppression and its effects within patriarchal societies such as South Africa, where her individual experiences are framed by structural systems of power and dominance of men over women (Meer & Muller). The effects of early exposure to VAW were evidenced in the participants narratives of being residentially displaced, where they were forced to find ways of surviving childhood violence, poverty and not having a sense or place of belonging, having been displaced in the aftermath of experiencing childhood violence. The significance of this finding is in that it showed that it was an intersection of structural, raced and gendered issues and inequalities related to experiences of WAW and children that shaped the residential instability that they reported facing and not having a sense of belonging. The finding that the girl children and their mothers were reliant on men for survival and belonging added to the finding that poor black women are often reliant on men. This spoke to previous findings that demonstrating that VAW cannot be studied or understood without acknowledging men's power and control over women in South African society (CSVR, 2017; Gibbs et al., 2018).

The first two themes highlighted how women's early experiences of VAW and their aftermath take place within structural gendered, racial and economic inequality. It highlights how patriarchy affects not only women but girls as well and how the childhood context of survivors of IPV is as important as the later experiences of IPV. It is a significant finding because as has been narrated by the women, the effects of early GBV within a patriarchal society framed how they navigate the rest of their childhood. Childhood could thus be viewed as an early point of intervention and prevention of VAW, poverty in girls and women, which could reduce the risk and potential for IPV later in women's lives. Most importantly would be prioritising stable homes and completion of schooling, which is argued and known to broaden their life choices and protect them from IPV. This study also identified another point of prevention of IPV against women in the finding of the importance and value that the women placed on finding love and belonging.

One of the most significant findings of this research is the importance that the women placed on love, particularly love from a male figure or man. The women in the study reported placing significant value on finding love and a sense of belonging from a man. The analysis of this finding demonstrated that the pursuit of love was a simultaneous pursuit for socioeconomic stability. Love and pursuit from love from men has been linked to the socioeconomic stability that men can provide because of the greater economic opportunities that they are afforded in patriarchal societies like South Africa (Bhana, 2013; Haysom, 2013). In light of preventing IPV as it relates to love and stability, as recent literature has pointed

out, more discourses on love and emotions should be included in discourses of IPV against women (Haysom, 2013; Herhily, 2013). Furthermore, as some of the participants pointed out and as previous research has eluded to, women's commitment to love and intimate relationships can mask early signs of abuse (Dare et al., 2013). Prevention strategies in this light could thus focus on early signs of abuse in relationships, without discounting the women's desire for love and relationship.

For the women in this study, love and commitment to intimate relationships as well as finding a sense of belonging and economic stability within those relationships made it difficult for the women to escape IPV. Furthermore, within a context where violence and IPV is normalised and support for IPV survivors is minimal, the women's own resultant minimisation of IPV made it difficult for them to leave their partners. These difficulties were narrated on in the final theme of *Normalisation of IPV experiences: The effects of withdrawal from support*

The final theme brought the intersections of the social identities, past lived experiences and the contextual factors surrounding exposure and continued vulnerability to IPV to the fore. These factors were related to growing up exposed to violence within a 'culture of violence' that normalises the subjugation of women, being isolated from family and sources of support because of childhood experiences of violence, being unemployed and poor within the context of gender inequality. This led to a continuation of marginalisation and social isolation which was complicit in the women being withdrawn from social support. This is problematic and significant because social support has been purported to be protective factor against IPV and its effects amongst South African women (Machisa et al., 2018). Within the context of broader structural and gender inequalities and being withdrawn from support, the women understood the lack of formal and informal support as making them vulnerable to violence once more, adding to previous such findings in South African IPV research (van Schalkwyk et al., 2014; Machisa et al., 2018). After the limitations, the recommendations section will offer potentially beneficial ways in which to take action on this through future IPV life history research.

Limitations

The limitations for this study were mainly due to the constrained timeframe for the study. The timeframe, as well as the sampling technique used, affected the sample size that could be obtained and the number of interviews that were held with each participant. The

chosen sampling method gave rise to a limitation in terms of not being able to recruit the proposed sample size. Furthermore, difficulties with slow communication with shelters for abused women arose as a limitation that slowed down the recruitment of the participants, meeting the proposed sample size for this study as well as adhering to the proposed timeline for the study. Although the slow communication with the shelter staff and social workers is presented as a limitation, which it was for this study, it also speaks to the overwhelming pressure and resource constraints that women's shelters seem to be facing in Cape Town. It was somewhat of a challenge to gain meetings with the relevant shelter staff and management, which was an important first step in the recruiting women participants for this study. In addition, the safeguarding of the women is something taken quite seriously within each shelter. This also took up significant time and created some lapses in communication These important factors related to shelters for abused women must be kept in mind in the planning of future research of this kind.

The constrained timeframe also affected the number of interviews that could be held with each participant in the study. As has been mentioned, life history interviews often require many hours of interviewing in order to capture a full life history (Goodson & Sikes, 2001). For this study, it was anticipated that within the time limits, two interviews per participant would be sufficient. The researchers and participants were able to cover a considerable amount of the participants' life histories and experiences of IPV within the two interviews. However, the limitations of time may have affected the depth of exploration of the narratives shared by the participants, where they sometimes only provided a summary of a particular narrative.

A final limitation was the lack of previous life history research on IPV against women to form the foundation of the literature review. Thus, to accommodate for this limitation, prior narrative studies on IPV formed the basis of much of the literature review pertinent to understanding the problem of IPV in South Africa, as narrative studies are the most similar studies to life history studies.

Recommendations and directions for future research

This study was able to capture a significant amount of the life history of the participants. However, I believe and recommend, as the literature suggests, that many hours of interview time should be set aside in future life history research on IPV for much deeper

exploration of the experiences of violence, fully capturing the life history and the complex context and associations within (Byrne, 2017).

In speaking to the broader context in which IPV emerges, much of VAW and IPV research (both qualitative and quantitative) in South Africa appears to frame IPV within an apartheid legacy language related to race and class oppressions and the 'culture of violence' within poor black people. Although these effects of the apartheid and the violence that stems from it are clear, these discourses can only be beneficial to IPV research and discourses in so much as they recognise the oppressive and intersectional race, class *and* gendered emergence of IPV (Allen, 2017; CSVR, 2017). As this study and others have shown, gender inequality is a key driver for IPV, especially where gender intersects with race and class (Crenshaw, 1991; CSVR, 2017). Boonzaier & van Schalkwyk (2011) previously demonstrated that a narrative methodological approach can offer more socio-political ways of contextualising and thinking about IPV, as it relates to issues of gender, poverty and an absence of social resources (Boonzaier & van Schalkwyk, 2011). As the CSVR (2017) suggests, it is recommended that future IPV research and especially life history IPV research explicitly explore and integrate the context of patriarchy and gender inequality throughout the lives of survivors of IPV, as such research offers early and multiple points of prevention of IPV from the invaluable perspective of women who have experienced it. This will likely add to a more nuanced intersectional and socio-political ways of thinking about interventions, refining current interventions and bringing solution to the problem of IPV, especially in the context of limited social resources.

Conclusion

In sum, using the life history approach has been beneficial in exploring the full life context of IPV survivors through the lens of intersectionality. The women were able to share their individualised and subjective perspectives and experiences but through collective thematic narrative analysis, this study was able to frame and shift their individual understanding and explanations of IPV to the broader social context from which IPV emerges, through looking at their full life stories. This is a demonstrated benefit of the life history approach from the literature (CSVR, 2017; Liang, 2005). For the participants, narrating using the life history method was often able to bring about new insights and renewed consciousness of their experiences which helped them to make sense and significance of their experiences, an equal benefit of narrative and life history research

(Boonzaier & van Scahlkwyk, 2011; Germeten, 2013). Thus, this research has provided benefit to both the survivors of IPV and to IPV research in South Africa, as it has helped to understand the context of emergence and persistence of IPV in the lives of South African women. Finally, this study has made unique contribution to the methodology used to study IPV, as it has built on the growing area of intersectional narrative studies on IPV and is amongst the first to study IPV through the life histories of survivors of IPV framed through an intersectional and contextual lens.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Information sheet for survivors

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

Department of Psychology

Research on intimate partner violence

You are invited to take part in a research study about violence against women in the form of intimate partner violence.

If you decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to do the following:

Two one-on-one tape-recorded interviews about your life story, your experience of intimate partner violence and any other forms of violence that you may have experienced in your life. Each interview should take no longer than 60 minutes.

This research will give you an opportunity to share your life story and experiences to improve our understandings of intimate partner violence in Cape Town, South Africa.

Any questions, concerns or complaints about the study?

Please contact:

Researcher:

René Chikwira email at chkren002@myuct.ac.za

Lauren Pechey email at pchlau003@myuct.ac.za

Research Supervisors:

Floretta Boonzaier on 0216503429 or email at Floretta.Boonzaier@uct.ac.za

OR

Taryn van Niekerk on 021 650 3432 or email at taryn.vanniekerk@uct.ac.za

OR

Chair of the Ethics Committee:

Rosalind Adams on 021 650 3417 or email at Rosalind.Adams@uct.ac.za

Appendix B: Consent form for interviews with survivors

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

Department of Psychology

Consent form

Stories about intimate partner violence

1. Invitation and purpose

You are invited to take part in a research study about violence against women. I am a student researcher from the Department of Psychology at University of Cape Town.

2. Procedures

If you decide to take part in this study, I will ask you to do two separate face-to-face interviews with me. The interviews will be focused on your life history and your experience of intimate partner violence. Each interview should take no longer than 60 minutes.

3. Risks and inconveniences

These interviews may cause you anxiety and/or psychological and emotional distress. If at any point of the interview you feel anxious or distressed, you can choose to stop the interview at any point without any negative consequences. You can also choose not to answer specific questions if you think that they will make you feel distressed.

The interviews will be conducted at the organisation you attend or at a convenient meeting place. The most convenient time for you and the researcher will be arranged.

4. Benefits

You are given an opportunity to share your views and experiences and your information will contribute to the larger purpose of understanding women's experiences of intimate partner violence.

5. Privacy and confidentiality

Interviews will be conducted in a private room to ensure confidentiality. The interviews will be tape-recorded. The researcher will take strict precautions to safeguard your personal information throughout the study. Your information will be kept on a password-protected device and in a locked file cabinet without your name and other personal identifiers. Once the study is complete, your tape-recorded information will be stored for a further 5 years and after this period it will be destroyed.

While this research will be used for educational purposes, there is a chance that this work might be published in an academic journal. In this case, your identity will still be kept confidential.

6. Money matters

You will be reimbursed for any transportation costs incurred to and from the research venue.

7. Contact details

If you have questions, concerns or complaints about the study, please contact the

Researcher:

René Chikwira email at chkren002@myuct.ac.za

Lauren Pechey email at pchlau003@myuct.ac.za

Research Supervisors:

Floretta Boonzaier on 0216503429 or email at Floretta.Boonzaier@uct.ac.za

Taryn van Niekerk on 021 650 3432 or email at taryn.vanniekerk@uct.ac.za

Chair of the Ethics Committee:

Rosalind Adams on 021 650 3417 or email at Rosalind.Adams@uct.ac.za

8. Signatures

(Participant's name) _____ has been informed of the

nature and purpose of the procedures described above including any risks involved in it performance. He/she has been given time to ask any questions and these questions have been answered to the best of the researcher's ability.

_____

Researcher's Signature Date

I have been informed about this research study and understand its purpose, possible benefits, risks, and inconveniences. I agree to take part in this research as a participant. I know that I am free to withdraw this consent and quit this project at any time, and that doing so will not cause me any penalty.

_____

Participant's Signature Date

PERMISSION TO TAPE-RECORD INTERVIEWS

I understand that the interview and group discussion will be tape-recorded and that the researcher will take strict precautions to safeguard my personal information throughout the study.

_____

Participant's Signature

Appendix C: Participant Demographic Form

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

A. Basic information

A1. Date of birth

A.2 Racial group

African	White	Coloured	Indian	Other

A.3 Area of residence _____

A.4 How long have you been at [*insert organisation name here*]? _____

B. Education and employment

B.1 The highest level/grade of education that you have completed:

No schooling	
Primary School	
High school (specify grade)	
Standard 10/Matric	
Higher education (Occupational Certificates/Diploma/Degree)	

Other:_____

B.2 How would you describe your present employment situation?

Student		
Unemployed		
Self-employed		
Employed part time (less than 40 hours per week)		
Employed full time (40 hours or more per week)		
Pensioner		
Sick/disabled and unable to work		
No response		
Other, specify:		

C. Socio-economic status and household composition

C.1 Which statement best describes your household situation?

a Not enough money for basics like food and clothes	1
b Have money for food and clothes, but short on many other things	2
c We have most of the important things, but few luxury goods	3
d Some money for extra things such as going away for holidays and luxury goods	4
e Don't know	5
f No response	6

C.2 What is the main source of your household income?

a Formal salary/earnings	1
b Contributions by **adult** family members or relatives	2
c Contributions by **younger** family members or relatives (<18 years)	3
d Government pensions/Grants (e.g. pension, disability grant)	4
e Grants/Donations by private welfare organizations	5
f Other (specify main source):	6
g No income	7

C.3 How many people live in your household? _____

D. Relationship status and family information

D.1. What is your current relationship status?

Single	
Married	
Cohabiting/living together, not married	
Partner, not living together, not married	

Other:_____

D.2. **If married or in a relationship**, how many **months/years** have you been with your current partner?

D.3 **In months**, what is the longest relationship/marriage you have been in?

D.4 Do you have any children and/or non-biological children you are caring for?

Yes	**No**
1	2

D.5 How many children are you caring for? (enter amount where relevant)

a. Biological children	
b. Non-biological children (specify)	

D.6 Do you have any other dependants (eg. caring for parents)?

Yes	**No**
1	2

D.7 If yes, how many other dependants do you have?

_____

Appendix D: Interview Schedule

Interview Schedule

Interview 1

Preface: My name is _____. Thank you for participating in our study. As we mentioned in the information session, this study is about the life history of survivors of intimate-partner violence. We will be having two interviews. The first interview will focus on how you ended up at *insert organisation name here*, and the second interview will focus on your life from childhood up until now.

But first, we have to cover some background information.

Read out the demographic form

Read through the informed consent with them*

I will now start recording this interview…

Do you have any questions before we start?

Questions:

1. How long have you been staying at [*insert organisation name here*]?
2. Can you tell me more about how you ended up at [*insert organisation name here*]?
3. Can you tell me about your relationship with your recent/current partner, from when you first met?
4. When did things start to change in your relationship?/When did the problems with your partner start?
    i. How long has this continued?
    ii. Are there times when this has improved, or gotten worse?
5. What kinds of abuse would you say you experienced at the hands of your partner?
    i. Can you tell me more about that?
    ii. What does he say to you?
    iii. What does he do to you?
6. How often would you say your partner is abusive to you?
7. How do you generally feel about this relationship?
8. Have you been in any other relationships where you were physically/mentally/emotionally abused?
    a. When?
    b. For how long?
    c. How did they end?
9. Have you ever discussed your problems with anyone (friends, family, anyone else in your community?
    a. How did they respond?
    b. Was there more that you would have liked them to do?
    c. What sort of things would have helped?

10. Looking back at your situation, what advice would you give to another woman who may be faced with similar issues with their partner?
11. What has it been like living at [*insert organisation name here*]?

Ending: So we have now come to the end of our first interview. Our second interview will be about your life history. If you could think of your life as a book with different chapters from childhood up until now. In our next interview, try to think of which chapters stand out for you, and which chapters you would like to talk about.

Interview 2

Start recording

I will now start recording.

Preface: In the last interview, we spoke about your experience of violence. Is there anything you would like to add?

So at the end of our last interview, I asked you to think about your life as a book with different chapters, starting from when you were a child to the person you are now. Which chapter would you like to talk about first?

Childhood:

12. Can you tell me about your childhood?
13. Where did you grow up?
14. What was it like living there?
15. Can you tell me about the family you grew up with?
    a. Who did you live with?
    b. What was it like living there?
    c. What was your relationship like with the people you lived with?
16. Did you face any abuse/violence in your childhood?
17. What can you tell me about your primary school years? ***amend depending on demographics***

Teenage years

2. Can you tell me about your teenage years, from age 13 until 18?
3. Where did you live?
4. Who did you live with during that time?
5. What was it like living there?
6. What was your relationship like with the people you lived with?
7. What can you tell me about your high school years? ***amend depending on demographics***
8. What are some key moments in your life when you were a teenager?
9. What do you know about your parents' lives?
10. What have they told you about their history?

Adulthood:

- Can you tell me about your adult life, from age 18 up until now?
- Where did you live?
- Who do you live with now?
- What is it like living there?
- Can you describe a typical day in your life?
- *If they have children:* What is your relationship like with your children?
- What is your relationship like with the people you live with?
- Can you tell me about any other important relationships you have?
- What are some of the most difficult things you can remember from your life?
    - When did they happen?
    - How did they affect your well-being/ that of your family?
- What are some of the best times you can remember from your life?
- How would you describe your life now?

Ending: Before we end, do you have anything you would like to add? Or any questions you would like to ask? We have come to the end of our interview. Thank you for participating and sharing your life history with me. If you feel the need to talk more about the research, please feel free to contact me. My details are on the information sheet you were given.

If you need to talk to anyone else, you can either talk to a social worker at the shelter, or you can contact one of these organisations.

Hand out the resource list

Hand out the voucher

Appendix E: Resource list

ORGANISATIONS OFFERING HELP FOR FEMALE VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE AND THEIR AND CHILDREN

1.Mosaic Training, Service and Healing Centre for Women

Wynberg

Call 021 761 7585

Website: www.mosaic.org.za

2.Saartjie Baartman Centre for Women and Children

Manenberg

Call 021 633 5287

Website: www.saartjiebaartmancentre.org.za

3.Women's Shelter Movement

48 Balfour Street, Woodstock, 7915

Call: 021 448 6792 / 021 488 8513
Email: info@stanneshomes.org.za
Website: wcwsm.org.za

4.St Anne's Homes

48 Balfour Street, Woodstock, 7915

Call: 021 448 6792 / 021 488 8513

Email: info@stanneshomes.org.za
Website: www.stanneshomes.org.za

5.Woman Abuse Line

Call 0800 150 150

6.Sisters Incorporated

Kennilworth

Call: 021 797 4190 / +27 62 532 4427

Appendix F: Participant Biographical Sketch

Shanaaz[5]	27 years old, Coloured, married with two children who are currently in an orphanage. Currently unemployed and struggling with obtaining basics. Her highest level of education is grade 10. Family is somewhat supportive.
Yas	30 years old, Coloured, unemployed and co-habiting with partner. Has 4 children – only lives with 2 of them. Highest level of education is grade 10. Estranged from family. Was in foster care with a foster mother she loved until 14, when she got married. Was married for 11 years and abused during the course of the marriage.
Sino	21 years old, African, single. Originally from the Eastern Cape. Employed in a part-time job but has no place to live and no one to rely on since her mother passed on. Has been in a number of abusive relationships since adolescence. Has a baby and is planning to complete her studies at CPUT, which she stopped when she was pregnant.
Nadine	21 years old, Coloured, single and has a baby. Relies on grant for income. Was close with her mother and aunt who both passed away and is not close with other family members. Went to a school of skills until grade 11; discontinued because of finances.
Leah	41 years old, Coloured, employed part-time. Going through second divorce with her husband. Has one son and 8 other dependants, whom she has good relationships with. Grew up with extended family. Highest level of education is grade 10.
Crystal	39 years old, White, unemployed and struggling to obtain basics. Grew up with immediate family-was abused within the home and witness to domestic violence. She has a partner and has a qualification as an Oral Hygienist. Has been in a number of abusive relationships.
Sino	26 years old, African, currently unemployed and reliant on child grant for income. Was exploited as a sex worker by an ex-partner. Has a partner and a baby. Lived at boarding school most of her childhood and is not close with her family.
Jennifer	47 years old, Coloured, has been married for 22 years, currently in divorce process. Grew up with extended family. Has been abused by her husband from before marriage. Has 5 children. Completed matric. Has no income and struggling to obtain basics.
Ammara	26 years old, Coloured, single, pregnant and employed part-time. Grew up with mother and in foster care for some time. Left school in grade 11. Was living with abusive ex-partner who threw her out of their house.
Michelle	22 years old, Coloured, unemployed and reliant on child grants and family contributions. Has a partner and two children. Has a matric education.
Samantha	34 years old, Coloured, single, unemployed and struggling to meet basic needs. Highest level of education is grade 10. Has one child. Was exploited as a sex worker by an ex-partner. Grew up in a turbulent and abusive home and often ran away from home.

[5] Pseudonyms have been used for all of the participants

Appendix G: Ethical Approval

Faculty of Humanities
Postgraduate Administration
University of Cape Town

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23 April 2018

Miss Rene Chikwira
E-mail: CHKREN002@MYUCT.AC.ZA
Student no.: CHKREN002

Dear Miss Chikwira

ACCEPTANCE OF MASTERS PROPOSAL BY HUMANITIES FACULTY BOARD

I have pleasure in advising that your research proposal as detailed below has been approved by the department, and the Faculty of Humanities in the Dean's Circular HUM 01/2018.

Kind regards
Sylvia.chauke@uct.ac.za
Miss Sylvia Chauke
Faculty of Humanities: Postgraduate office

cc Supervisor/s: A/Professor F Boonzaier

CANDIDATE	STUDENT NO.	DEPT	SUPERVISOR	CO-SUPERVISOR	TITLE
Chikwira, R	CHKREN002	PSY	A/Prof F Boonzaier	Dr T van Niekerk	Survivors' narratives of intimate partner violence in Cape Town, South Africa: a life history approach